

ANECDOTES

OF

TWO WELL-KNOWN FAMILIES.

WRITTEN BY A DESCENDANT;

AND DEDICATED TO

THE FIRST FEMALE PEN IN ENGLAND.

PREPARED FOR THE PRESS

By MRS. PARSONS,

Author of "An Old Friend with a New Face,"

&c. &c.

"Of real novelty we're told there's none ;
"We know there's nothing new beneath the sun :
"Yet still, untir'd, a phantom we pursue ;
"Still expectation gapes at something new."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. H.

LONDON:

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1798.

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TWO VOLUMES

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

THE GREAT BRITAIN

AND

REMARKS ON THE

BY ALAN FARRISON

Author of "The Old English and the New"

Vol. II.

London

"Of right necessity we must have a new history of the reign of George III. We know that the reign of George III. was a reign of the people, and we know that the reign of George III. was a reign of the people, and we know that the reign of George III. was a reign of the people."

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ANECDOTES

OF

TWO WELL-KNOWN FAMILIES.

“THE father of your friend the countess, and the grandfather of my lord, you have doubtless heard, retired to France in disgust from his native country, accompanied by his son, and only one attendant, a young man near eighteen, who had been brought up in the earl’s family from a child. Very soon after their arrival in France the earl was taken ill; anxiety of mind, grief, it is said, for the loss of his lady, which had long preyed upon his heart; added to the fatigues of body in a long and dangerous passage, proved altogether too much for the weakness of his constitution to support.

“ He had been strongly recommended to a Jesuit belonging to a college at St. Omer’s, where he then resided. He sent for the good father, and having committed his child, only three years old, to *his* care, and the faithful servant, whose attachment he was well assured of; he charged them with the education of his son till he arrived at the age of one-and-twenty, at which period a sealed packet was to be given to him by the Jesuit, into whose possession it was then given.

“ I should have told you, that on his quitting England he had assumed the name of Mr. Boteler, the maiden name of his mother, and by that name only was known to the college at St. Omer’s.

“ A sum of money, which he had found means to take with him, was deposited in very respectable hands; the interest was given to the college for the maintenance of his little son and the servant, who had sworn never to forsake him.

“ It was his last request that no accounts relative to himself or child should be sent to England. He had placed his daughter in



in safe hands, he said, and possibly, though his estates were sequestered from him and his heirs, at some future period they might be restored to an innocent unoffending woman, when it was supposed the male line was extinct. This he said in confidence to the servant William.

“ The earl died, and was buried in the Jesuits’ church : his son and the servant became residents in the college, and met with the utmost care and attention. No particular events took place there, except that young Boteler, as he was called, as he grew up, shewed a great predilection for a military life ; and so incessantly wearied his guardians with importunities on that head, that, apprehensive of his going from them clandestinely, they at length agreed to let him make one campaign as a volunteer. William determined to follow his steps. He was just seventeen when he quitted the college and took up arms.”

Here the countess stopt. “ To own the truth, my love,” said she, “ I find I have undertaken more than I have courage to perform : I already feel tired of this dull

narrating; if you have patience to wait a day or two I will commit the story to paper, and you may read it at your leisure, for I would rather employ my hours with you more agreeably, than in proving thus, and losing the pleasure of your conversation."

Elinor made a suitable return to this kindness, and requested her ladyship to take her own time and mode for relating the family history, as she was certain of being the gainer by that postponement she proposed.

"You are very obliging, my dear; well then I shall tell you, that I am a little vexed that you have made no enquiries about my Edward. The vain mother is apt to think, that, if once known, he is not likely to be forgotten; and as it was natural to expect him here, I feel as if you *ought* to have asked why he did not accompany us."

What a stroke was this to poor Elinor, whose eyes had a hundred times asked the question, though her lips were closed! She hesitated, attempted to speak, and was
shocked

shocked at her own emotions that would not permit her to be articulate. At length, "It did not become me, madam, I thought, to take notice of the circumstance you mention: I never shall forget lord L * * *, (she was on the point of saying Edward,) or the services he rendered me; though I did not take the liberty to enquire why we were not favoured with his presence."

"You have come off tolerably well," returned the countess, "otherwise I should have been offended at having my favourite neglected; but you are sincerity itself, and, I know, mean what you say. I must tell you then, that on our going to London we met with two French gentlemen of fashion, with whom we were well acquainted abroad: they were come to make the tour of England, and earnestly requested Edward to accompany them; he seemed extremely reluctant; but my lord enforced their request, and the more earnestly, because he seems to have an unaccountable depression of spirits lately.

“ When he came to me from this castle I was then dangerously ill ; and as no mother ever had a more affectionate son, I concluded my situation caused the dejection so visible to every one. But I am grieved to say, that though my recovery seemed to inspire the purest joy, and the return of his father disclosed to him the important secret so long concealed, of his rank and expectations, which, one would naturally suppose, must be very gratifying to a young man; yet he soon sunk into the same depressive, thoughtful air, nor could all our affectionate enquiries obtain any satisfaction as to the cause.

“ When your letter,” continued she, “ met my lord at Mr. Truman’s, he gave it to Edward ; ‘ Read there,’ said he, ‘ a confirmation of all our hopes.’ He seemed to peruse it with pleasure ; but that pleasure was short-lived. The bustle which consequently engaged him and my lord in their exertions to prove their rights, and, by the interest of baron P * * * to establish their claims, and get the sequestration
taken

taken off, for a time engaged him; but no sooner was the business accomplished, almost beyond our hopes, than his disorder returned, and this occasioned us to deny ourselves the happiness of his company, and oblige him to accompany his noble friends.

“ Thus you see, my dear child, there are no pleasures without their concomitant pains : pure and unmixed felicity is not the lot of mortals. It is for our beloved Edward that we have been solicitous to have my lord restored to his honours and estates ; and now we are oppressed by a thousand anxieties for the health of this darling object. Heaven grant that this little excursion may have the desired effect of returning him to us with his once-accustomed cheerfulness !”

Elinor listened to this affecting picture of a mother's feelings with a palpitating heart, and the strongest emotions. When the countess stopt, “ I hope,” said she, in a tremulous voice, “ I earnestly hope every wish of yours, my dear madam, may be realized, and that my lord L * * * will

return to you in perfect health." The countess was pleased with her sympathy and affectionate reply; and from that hour the most perfect regard for each other took place, which promised to be as lasting as sincere.

Near six weeks passed away without any material occurrence, during which time the Malcolms had left the castle with Bridget and Sandy, who were married; and Elinor performed *more* than she had generously promised, so that they retired to pass their days in comfort. New servants were hired; new furniture was arrived; and they soon expected guests to pay a visit of some days,—sir William, lady Douglas, their son William just come of age, and in the possession of a fine estate; and their daughter Miss Douglas, about nineteen, a very handsome, accomplished, but a very proud young woman, her fortune and connexions being of the first rate.

Baron P * * * was also expected; and they had received visits of congratulation from several families round. In those days it was not the fashion to emigrate from
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from their own country, to receive the advantages of their estates in Scotland, and spend their money in England, while the poor tenantry laboured to raise money for the support of their lairds in another kingdom.

Those lairds then circulated their fortunes at home, lived upon their estates, and the surplus of their hospitable tables fed many poor families, whose attachment, in consequence of the benefits they derived from their chieftains, was almost proverbial. A Scots nobleman, or chieftain, had hundreds of vassals, whose blood would have been spilt with exultation in defence of their respective masters ; and the national spirit of mutual amity was diffused among all ranks of that brave people to their mutual advantage.

The earl and countess of B * *, therefore, soon had visitors to congratulate their arrival among them, who rejoiced to find they exchanged an unsocial, recluse old lady, for people of the world.

During this interval of six weeks, in the earliest part of it, lady B * * had given

Elinor the promised written narrative; and in this pause of incidents, we will take the opportunity to lay it before our readers. The countess took up the story where she had dropped it: where the young Mr. Boteler, as he was called, and his servant William left the Jesuits' college, and took up arms as volunteers. We shall proceed in the words of the countess:

“ Mr. Boteler, then seventeen, was uncommonly tall and manly of his age; a fine spirited young man, sensible, learned, and endowed with many virtues. On his arrival in the army he was particularly noticed by the marquis de Clarencé, and under his command signalised himself in more than one battle. When the campaign was over he accompanied the marquis to Paris, and was introduced to his family: there he saw the lovely Sophia, the youngest daughter of his friend, who was destined to take the veil in another year.

“ Love, the most ardent and affectionate, seized the hearts of those young people
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on a very short acquaintance. That same sly urchin soon produced a mutual understanding; and conscious that they were too young to marry, neither having any provision, they engaged their hearts and faith, and she promised resolutely to resist the veil till a favourable opportunity offered for them to be united.

“ The military ardour of our young hero was cooled; he thought the winter had passed rapidly away, and the orders to attend their quarters came upon them mighty soon. However, there could be no delay; he attended with the father of Sophia to take leave of her at the convent, and endeavoured to hide the anguish of his heart from the unsuspecting eye of the marquis.

“ They repaired to the camp; several battles, or rather skirmishes, passed between the armies, till the winter season drawing on, a general battle was agreed upon by both parties. It took place, and to the extreme affliction of Mr. Boteler, he saw the marquis fall dead by his side on the very first discharge from the enemy.

Grief and despair animated him to perform wonders, but he was at length overpowered, and fell among the dying and the dead.

“Insensible of what passed, he was recovered to life by the exquisite pain of probing his wounds; and saw he was in his own tent, and attended by the surgeon of the regiment, and a serjeant who had been under the command of the marquis. It seems almost in the moment that he fell victory had declared for the French, the retreat was founded, and the enemy fled. The serjeant who saw him fall dragged him from among the heap, and had him carried to the tent of his deceased master, seeing there were yet signs of life; and through the humane care of him and the surgeon he was restored to sensibility.

“When his wounds were dressed, and the surgeon had given hopes none of them would prove mortal if he had rest and quiet, he only asked for his faithful William. The serjeant shook his head, ‘Ah! Sir,’ said he, ‘I fear he is either dead or a prisoner. When you fell he was surrounded by numbers, and was lost in the

crowd fighting like a tyger to revenge your death, not having the power to approach you. He has not been seen or heard of since.'

" This account greatly distressed Mr. Boteler; he had lost his best friend, and most faithful servant, and they were extremely apprehensive his grief would have been attended with the most fatal effects. Happily it proved otherwise; his recovery, though slow, was at length perfected, and he repaired to Paris to see the afflicted family of the marquis, who, by his death, were thrown into the utmost distress.

" The fortune of the marquis was small; he had four daughters, and no provision was left for them that could maintain them among their former connexions. Boteler knew that he was entitled to five thousand pounds, besides some valuables left by his father, when he became of age: the interest had been settled on him when he left the college; but that interest, he feared, would be very insufficient to maintain a family: yet he determined to marry Sophia.

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“He most sincerely and bitterly regretted the loss of his faithful William, whose death seemed certain and inevitable, whom he loved and respected more like a friend and relation than like a servant: and indeed to him the loss of such a worthy counsellor was an irreparable one.

“He met with no opposition from the marchioness, to his matrimonial plan: she was a gay thoughtless woman, and glad to get rid of an incumbrance at any rate, as she intended to immure the two next sisters in convents, that her eldest and favourite daughter might share with her the little fortune of their father.

“In fine, Mr. Boteler married, and carried his beloved Sophia to St. Omer. His friend the Jesuit was hurt at the imprudent step he had taken in marrying so early; but it was done, therefore regrets or remonstrances were fruitless. He continued to be his friend and adviser. They often lamented the fate of William; and every possible inquiry was set on foot to trace him, if a prisoner, but without effect, and they gave him up as one among the dead.

“Mr.

“ Mr. Boteler and his wife lived in the most perfect union ; she proved pregnant, and in due time was brought to bed of a son, my present lord. Soon after his birth, his unfortunate father had a fall from his horse, when he was with a hunting party ; no limbs being broken, they hoped the consequences would be trifling, but unhappily he had received some inward bruises which threw him into a rapid decline.

“ Every remedy that love and friendship could procure were administered ; but in vain did his charming wife weary Heaven with her prayers ; the disorder baffled every aid of medicine, every exertion of conjugal love, and she saw his last hour approaching fast, without the smallest ray of hope to protract it, or the possibility of giving ease to the excruciating pains that destroyed him.

“ What her feelings were, my dear Elinor, you can form no idea of ; a wife, a mother only can judge of them in that dread hour of separation from those so dear to our hearts. The worthy Jesuit meantime was greatly perplexed ; the sealed packet given
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into his hands to be delivered only when his charge arrived at the age of one and twenty, was still in his possession; for the unfortunate Mr. Boteler was not then twenty, though a husband and a father.

“The peculiar circumstances under which he lay in the good father’s opinion justified him in revealing the secret, and, after long wavering, he determined to mention it. He did so; Mr. Boteler was surprised; he thought, with the Jesuit, that the restricted time might be dispensed with in his dying state. The packet was opened, it contained a letter addressed to him by his father, with every circumstance of his family, birth, and legal rights; with directions to apply to Mr. and Mrs. Matham, in whose care he had placed his sister, and who had two miniatures in their possession, with the certificates of his marriage and the birth of his son.

“Several other particulars were mentioned, with advice how to proceed in order to obtain the restoration of his estates, if the times were such as to make his claims eligible with any prospect of success.

“ Mr.

“ Mr. Boteler, you may suppose, was greatly surpris'd, and most probably more than ever regretted his approaching death. He consulted with the Jesuit ; his servant, his only witness, was no more ; his child an infant ; his wife a stranger, with few friends, and no money to support the difficulties likely to be thrown in her way.

“ The consequence might be, involving those dear objects, so soon to be bereft, of their chief adviser, in a thousand perplexities, perhaps to the ruin of their little property. After mature deliberation, the Jesuit concurred with him in opinion that the secret had better be still retained from the knowledge of his wife until her son should arrive to the age of eighteen, or if he died, then the papers and every particular to be transmitted to whatever part of the family should be in existence.

“ Weak as he was, he lost no time in having a copy taken of the contents of this packet, with an acknowledgment from the good father of the transactions between them ; of his being delivered by his late father to the guardianship of him and William,

liam, with all the subsequent events, and the birth of this son, now legal heir to the title and estates of his grandfather.

“ Having taken every caution human prudence could suggest, the original packet was resealed, and deposited in the care of the heads of the college, to be delivered to his son at the age of eighteen; and the copy he gave also sealed up into the hands of his dear Sophia, with a strict charge not to let it be opened till the above period.

“ The afflicted lady promised to observe all his injunctions, without expressing any curiosity; for her mind was too absorbed in grief to find room for any other sentiment; and in a very few days her worst apprehensions were verified, and she lost the worthiest and most affectionate of husbands, before he had attained the age of twenty, she only eighteen.

“ 'Tis impossible not to feel for this unfortunate pair, so early separated, and so soon involved in sorrow. The amiable madame Boteler struggled with her grief, and sought, in the tender cares of a mother, an alleviation of the misfortune that pressed
hard

hard upon her heart. A double duty seemed devolved upon her, and she resolved religiously to perform it: at that early age she secluded herself from the world, and devoted her life to the preservation of her child.

“ He was about seven years old, when she was informed her friend the Jesuit was at the point of death: she flew to the college just in time to receive the benediction of a truly honest man; a rare character, I fear, in that profession. Yet charity should teach us to believe, and to hope, that in every profession, in every sectary, whatever may be their creed, there are many good and upright hearts: indiscriminate, general censure against any nation, faith, or set of people, must originate from narrow prejudice, a bad heart, and a limited understanding. But to return—

“ The good father recommended to her one of the same order as himself; a much younger man, and likely to live and be of service to her. Father Joseph was sent for, and the dying man did his best to lament

ment a friendship between them, which was broken only by death.

“ Madame Boteler took a last leave of her good friend, whom she survived only four years. During that period this excellent young woman was the most exemplary of mothers; and when she found her last end approaching, from an inflammation on her lungs, she bequeathed her darling son to the joint care of father Joseph and her mother; with whom she had always kept up a correspondence, both from duty and inclination. They were joint trustees for him and his little fortune, the principal of which had never been diminished.

“ The marchioness, no ways desirous of being troubled with the education of a child, consented that her grandson should be brought up in the college until he was fifteen. Through the attention of a learned and good man, he made every improvement that a good heart and a sprightly genius could have been expected to attain.

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“ When he was fifteen, his grandmother claimed him to reside some time with her. The fathers of the college saw him depart with real concern, nor did he feel less; yet the idea of seeing the great world at Paris dried up his tears after the first pain of separation was over, and when he alighted at the hotel of his grandmother, he was in such spirits, so confused, so astonished by the wonders that surrounded him, that he no longer regretted the college, the Jesuits, or his juvenile companions at St. Omers.

“ The marchioness was delighted to see a tall, elegant boy enter the room with a light step, pleasure dancing in his eyes; when she had expected a poor, mopish, awkward bookworm.

“ Her eldest daughter, the favorite, was married, and gave herself but little concern about her mother, being immersed in the follies of fashion; the other two girls, who had been sacrificed to pride, had been long since professed; and the marchioness having no longer the attraction of young girls, nor of quite so many charms as she formerly boasted of, found the homage of
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the young man *insensibly* decrease at first, but at length the too obvious neglect forced itself upon her mind, and left a vacuum she wanted to fill.

“ The arrival of young Boteler was something new, and she presently introduced him to all the parties she was admitted at ; but his aunt beheld him with the most decided aversion. Young as he was, he neither wanted sensibility nor proper pride ; he observed her coldness, and he returned it in kind.

“ His grandmother grew passionately fond of him, he had every master that could give a polish to his manners and understanding ; rapidly profiting by his instructions, and looking older than he really was by at least two years, he found ready admittance into the first companies.

“ One day he happened to fall into the society of a French admiral, then about to take the command of a squadron against the Spaniards. He talked with such enthusiasm of his profession, that he communicated some part of his feelings to young Boteler ; the other perceived it, and pursued

sued his ground till he fired his young mind with a passion for glory, and produced from him an offer of accompanying the admiral as a volunteer.

“ The offer was readily accepted ; and as both knew the marchioness would have set her face against it, they contrived their matters so well, that she knew nothing of the plan till he had been gone twenty-four hours, and a letter was delivered to her, entreating her forgiveness of a step to which he was led by an irresistible impulse, and which had been concealed from her with no other view than to spare her the pain of parting. He avowed affection, gratitude, and respect, and indulged a flattering hope that his conduct would entitle him not only to pardon but to applause.

“ Not to be too prolix, the fleet he was in came to an engagement with the Spaniards ; it proved a desperate one ; the ship he was in was entangled with one of the enemy's. Boteler fought with amazing courage ; but rash and impetuous, in the heat of the action, just as he had struck the
commander

commander to the ground, he was hustled on board their ship, and soon stretched by the side of the captain he had so dangerously wounded.

“ It was some hours before his recollection returned, when he found himself in a dismal hole surrounded by Spaniards, and immediately conceived that he was a prisoner. He afterwards learnt, that just as his rashness had thrown him into the power of the enemy, the ships were cleared from each other, and the disabled state of the Spaniard obliged them to sheer off, and make their way to the first port.

“ The captain's wounds were not mortal, and he saw the youth who had reduced him to that fallen state, in rather a worse condition than his own. He ordered his wounds to be dressed, and that he should be taken care of; not with a view, as it afterwards appeared, to treat him as one brave man usually does another, but to gratify an unpardonable thirst for revenge.

“ Boteler was questioned by a man who spoke French, as to his name, his rank, and situation in the French navy. He was perfectly

perfectly candid in his replies ; which being reported to the great count de Merida, his pride and rage was proportionably raised, that a youth without a title, of comparatively obscure birth, and a simple volunteer, should have presumed to raise his arm against a Spanish nobleman who had a half hundred titles, and whose ancestors had all been grandees of Spain among the old nobility.

“ This proud Spaniard possessed neither generosity nor humanity ; he was stern, ferocious, and revengeful ; and only malice like his would have sought gratification in such an extraordinary way, for the effect of the common chance of war.

“ When the ship came into port, the captain, the great count, was carried in a litter to his own castle ; and poor Boteler was also taken there, though not quite so well accommodated. In a short time the count was so well recovered as to walk ; he then entered the chamber where Boteler was yet confined, extremely weak, and incapable of any exertion. Till this visit no words had ever been exchanged be-

tween them ; the youth gave him credit for generous humanity ; he was now to be undeceived.

“ ‘ Audacious boy ! ’ exclaimed he, in a voice of thunder, ‘ how durst thou lift thy hand against the count de Merida ? ’ Boteler, though surprised, could scarcely help smiling at the absurd question—‘ I know not the count de Merida,’ answered he ; ‘ I fought in my own defence, against the enemies of my country ; I had no enmity, or desire of vengeance on any single man.’ — ‘ Tis false,’ replied the proud noble ; ‘ thou must have distinguished *me*, and thy presumption urged thee to aim a stroke I never will forgive ; no, never shall the wretch exist who dares to boast a conquest over me.’

“ ‘ For what purpose, then, was I brought here, and preserved from death ? ’ — ‘ To make my vengeance more complete ; to die a living death, and make thee curse existence.’ — He withdrew with a fierce air ; and in a few hours after, poor Boteler was removed to a solitary room, where only a small grated window

dow let in the light, the walls mouldering and decayed, and an old broken couch its only furniture.

“ A whole week he lived in this wretched hole with no other sustenance than bread and water ; happily his wounds were healing, and his mind superior to the malice of his unjust enemy.

“ The ninth day of his confinement his door was opened, several men appeared, and he was ordered to follow them : he obeyed ; and at the bottom of a staircase he was put into a close carriage, and in that travelled for some hours. When he stopped, he found himself by the sea-side, and persons apparently waiting for him— ‘ Here, captain,’ said one of his conductors, ‘ *this* is your man.’

“ He was taken hold of, resistance was in vain, nor was he permitted to speak, but put on board a boat, from thence conveyed to a vessel, which in a few hours set sail for New Spain.

“ ’Tis unnecessary to trouble you with the occurrences during a disagreeable voyage ; Boteler understood he was given up

as an enemy to the king of Spain, and to be employed as a slave in the mines discovered in that new world. He found all remonstrances, or representations of real facts, were fruitless to procure his liberty; and the commands of a Spanish grandee were of two much consequence to be superseded by the pleas of innocence or undeserved cruelty.

“ They reached their destined port, and he was conveyed to Lima, where he was indiscriminately joined with common slaves, and obliged to toil for a bare existence. At some future period, my dear Elinor, my lord shall give you an account of all his adventures abroad. I shall pass them over. He was six years in this country exposed to every hardship, till within the last four months, when it pleased Heaven to reward his fortitude and patience by an unexpected deliverance.

“ The governor’s son was remarkable for his humanity; a very delicate constitution had humanized his feelings, and taught him often to mitigate the sufferings of others; to him the slaves were indebted for

for more lenity than they would otherwise have experienced.

“ One day he happened to walk where Boteler was at work with some others; he observed them for some time, and then called to Boteler. Perfectly conversant in the Spanish language, he obeyed the command, and advanced, bowing with an air superior to a common slave.—‘ Who are you,’ said don Marcos (the gentleman’s name); ‘ for what crime are you condemned to work here? Fear not to speak the truth; I may serve, but cannot injure you.’ Boteler, with a modest, assured air, briefly repeated the nature of his offence, and the unwarrantable vengeance of a proud, vindictive grandee.

“ Don Marcos heard him with attention, and when he had concluded—‘ I blush for my countryman,’ said he; ‘ I have no doubt of your veracity; the nobleness of your air attracted my notice; years of labour have not deprived you of a superior distinction to your companions: bear your misfortunes with patience an-
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other day, I flatter myself to-morrow will see them ended.'

" In fine, the following day he was sent for to the governor's, and, at the request of don Marcos, immediately liberated. This worthy young man was by his physicians ordered to his own country as the only chance for saving his life; and however distressing to his father to part with him, the dearer consideration of his health made him submit to it. Great preparations were made for his departure to an uncle who lived at Madrid; and the governor acceded to the wishes of his son, that Boteler should accompany him, after pledging his sacred word that he would never seek revenge on the count de Merida, or disclose his deliverance from slavery.

" Being convinced that the safety and interests of his benefactors were materially concerned in his strict silence and observance of those conditions, he hesitated not to confirm them by a solemn oath.

" The governor made him some very valuable presents to insure his attention to his

his son: *that* was not necessary, gratitude had already attached him to don Marcos. They landed safely at Cadiz; but the young Spaniard had been daily growing worse through the whole voyage: touched with the affectionate zeal of Boteler, the evening previous to their arrival he put into his hands a small casket.

“ ‘ My good friend,’ said he, ‘ I have but small hopes of life ; but, whether I live or die, I wish to secure you from further persecutions ; the contents of this will be a moderate provision ; ’tis but trifling to me, but accept it as a mark of friendship. Refuse me not,’ added he, Boteler drawing back ; ‘ I conjure you to take it, as you value my esteem, or would have me to believe I possess yours.’ ”

“ The obliged friend could no longer decline it, though, when he afterwards viewed the contents, he felt uneasy at the value of the present ; but he was not permitted to say a word on the subject. He attended don Marcos to his uncle, passed a month with them, and had the extreme

satisfaction to leave his friend, if not well, yet much better than he had been during the voyage. He took leave of them to visit Paris, and see his grandmother the marchioness, whom he hoped pleasingly to surprise.

“ On his arrival he found himself almost a stranger to the city, and unable to direct his steps to her hotel. He therefore went into an auberge, and ordered a messenger to take a letter for him, inquiring of the master of the house if he knew where the marchioness lived. He protested he knew no such lady. He then recollected the name of his aunt. O, yes, the man said, he knew madam St. Amand. In short, Boteler wrote to his grandmother and aunt, and requested leave to pay his respects to them.

“ He received a freezing billet from his aunt, ‘ that her dearly beloved mother had been dead two years, leaving *her* all that she possessed. She was sorry she could not invite him to her hotel, as monsieur St. Amand, herself, and a large party, were going

going that day into the country to spend some weeks with a friend.'

" This billet was a thunder-clap to poor Boteler, but he had too much spirit to intrude further on his aunt; he grieved for the death of the marchioness, as he had so precipitately left her, and he feared had been the occasion of much sorrow.

" He was now literally a stranger in his own country, and therefore resolved to hasten his departure to St. Omer, in the hope that his good friend the Jesuit would receive him with pleasure.

" At St. Omer he soon arrived, and every object there was recognised with heartfelt pleasure. The scenes of his youthful days came fresh to his remembrance, and his grateful heart fled before him to the college.

" On his arrival he found a new porter: he asked for father Joseph, and was conducted to his apartment. The father rose to receive him with respect as a stranger. For a moment, his *ci-devant* pupil enjoyed his embarrassment; but, unable to contain himself longer, he hugged him

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closely in his arms, exclaiming, 'My dear father, have you forgotten your son Boteler?' A cry of joy escaped from the worthy man as he fervently returned the embrace.

"Heaven and its holy saints be praised!" said he; 'this is a blessing I never could have expected!' He then earnestly inquired into the particulars of his long absence. Boteler gave him a very circumstantial account of every incident, concluding with his journey to Paris, the death of his grandmother, and the polite billet from his aunt.

"Father Joseph started up, and traversed the room greatly agitated. 'How! my son,' said he, 'is the good lady dead? in truth, this is a very unfortunate event for you. Listen to me, I fear there is foul play against you.

"We received a letter from the marchioness, bitterly lamenting the imprudence of your conduct in going to sea, but that she trusted the admiral would prove your friend. We were not less grieved than her, but also hoped the best. Some time after we received a second letter

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ter that almost broke my heart—enclosing a certificate from the admiral you sailed with, of your being killed in the engagement on board the enemy's ship, which was afterwards confirmed by a letter from the Spanish commander in answer to his inquiries.

““ Your grandmother added, that as you no longer existed, *she*, as your nearest relation, guardian, and in right of your heirs, who were the two children of your mother's sister, she claimed all your property to be immediately put into her possession.

““ We had no legal right to refuse, yet conceived we ought to wait till the period assigned by the will of your father, before we gave up the trust, until you were eighteen. We could not doubt of your death, yet were unwilling to relinquish the property till that time, giving a possible chance that you might have escaped death, and been made a prisoner.

“ Our obstinacy displeased her, and she soon produced an order by authority which compelled us to give up all your property,

perty, and, what I fear is of more consequence, some papers which were deposited here in trust both by your father and mother.

“ ‘ Now, my good son, she being dead, your aunt has possession of the whole, and from thence arises that cool billet, for you may be assured she never desires to see you more.’ ”

“ Mr. Boteler was extremely concerned at this account from the good father, not so much for the loss of his money, he had more than twice the value of that in gold and jewels by the munificence of don Marcos ; it was the papers he regretted, which the good father seemed to think were of so much consequence. After a long conversation, he visited the heads of the college, who rejoiced to see him, though they greatly regretted the injustice that had been committed against him, and undertook of themselves to write to madame St. Amand on the subject.

“ This was done, and the answer received was, ‘ that the claimant must be an impostor, as they had unquestionable vouch-

ers of the death of her nephew from the admiral, the ship's crew, and a letter from the Spanish commander; that her children were in possession of the fortune; and if the claimant chose to follow up his iniquitous demand by a process at law, she was ready to meet him on that ground when he pleased.'

"The billet she had inadvertently written was in the moment of surprise, without then having time for consideration. She concluded with advising the Jesuits to be cautious in their proceedings, that they might not bring disgrace on their college by espousing an impostor: that as to the papers, she had never seen them, but had heard of such given by her mother to her confessor, who had since been removed to some distant province, and whether dead or alive she knew not.

"Such was the answer, and the downfall of Mr. Boteler's hopes; for as to a process of law, he could not endure the thoughts of it; besides he had no doubt but that the great count de Merida would deny every circumstance in which he was concerned,
and

and he had pledged his solemn word to the governor of Lima not to mention his liberation from captivity. The money was not the object of his regret. The fathers gave him to understand those papers related to some mysterious circumstances respecting his father's family, and therefore the recovery of them was the only cause of his anxiety.

“The fathers, as we have since been informed, consulted together, whether, as the contents were known to father Joseph, he ought to reveal them? but, after mature deliberation, they concluded, that as his relation would be unsupported by proofs, and could only tend to distress and harass the mind of poor Boteler, it would be wiser for them to set on foot a private inquiry after the confessor, and endeavour to obtain further lights before they made any disclosure to him.

“In consequence of this determination they gave no intimation of the particular events attached to his family, contenting themselves with assuring him they would with indefatigable zeal seek to trace the
confessor

confessor of the late marchioness, and hoped some day to recover his papers.

“ He staid some time at St. Omer ; but receiving a letter from his good friend don Marcos, in answer to one he had written, requesting he would meet him at Montpelier, he accepted the invitation, and set forward on his journey. On the fourth day after he had left his friends at St. Omer, a very heavy storm overtook him just as he entered the town of Moulins, and he gladly hastened to the first inn that presented itself.

“ In this very inn, dear Elinor, I was in the most melancholy situation possible to be conceived, attending a sick and dearly-beloved father, who had been ordered by his physicians to try the air of Montpelier as a last resource against a disorder that had irrecoverably injured his constitution, and for the last fortnight made a rapid progress.

“ Six days he had been unable to travel ; and you may judge of my distress, young, alone, with only five servants, three men and two women, in hourly apprehension

sion of losing the best of parents, and my only protector.

“The divine goodness of Providence sent Mr. Boteler, like a guardian angel, to soften the horrors that had possession of my mind; he arrived in a critical moment when my father had been seized with a convulsion, which I thought the last struggle of expiring nature. My shrieks met his ear as he entered the house. Greatly alarmed, he inquired the cause of such piercing sounds, and was in a few words made acquainted with my deplorable situation. Actuated by an irresistible impulse, as he afterwards told me, he sent the mistress of the inn before him to say, that a French gentleman requested permission to offer his services. Before I could make any reply, for I lay almost senseless in the arms of my woman, he entered, and advanced to the bed, where he beheld my dear father apparently recovering: observing the nurse and his valet were using proper remedies, he came to me.

“ ‘ Pray,

“‘Pray, dear madam, compose your spirits, the gentleman is better; there is no cause for this alarming distress.’ More he would have said, but the faint voice of my father reached me in the same moment, and I flew to the bed-side, almost without noticing the polite stranger. My father being recovered, Mr. Boteler thought it necessary to apologize for this intrusion, as he called it. We were struck both by his manner and person; and my dear parent, well as he could, thanked him for his attention. My eyes, I believe, said more than my lips could utter: and the storm continuing with unabating violence, Mr. Boteler gave up all thoughts of proceeding on his journey for that day.

“He asked permission to sit by my father, and joined with him in persuading me to retire and take a few hours’ rest, not having had my clothes off for four days and nights. I complied with their wishes, and really exhausted by grief and fatigue, I enjoyed near five hours’ refreshing sleep.

“On

“ On my return to the sick-room, I saw Mr. Boteler sitting close to the bed, and my father (whose name I should have told you was sir Philip Hales) apparently dozing. He lay in this calm state near an hour, during which not one word passed between the young gentleman and myself, lest we should disturb his temporary rest. But I do not tell you that our eyes were quite so self-denying, or our thoughts so very abstracted, as not to have a kind of intuitive conversation, if I may so express myself, that fastened on both our hearts, from that moment, an affection that I trust will remain for ever unbroken.

“ Not to dwell on the most afflictive moment of my life, I shall only add, that before night the convulsions returned, and by four in the morning I lost the best and most affectionate of parents. Your feeling heart, my dear Elinor, can easily conceive what were my sufferings; yet I was more peculiarly distressed. I had lost my mother in early life: I had no near relations: the title and family estate, which
was

was considerable, devolved to a very distant relation. My mother's fortune had been ten thousand pounds, which was secured for me; and my father had always lived greatly within his income, that he might save from it for his darling and only child.

"At his death, therefore, I found myself possessed of near sixty thousand pounds, besides jewels, and all the valuable effects he had the power to dispose of. His will had been made four years before, when I was under age, and trustees appointed till I attained the age of twenty-one, when I was to be my own mistress. At the period when I lost my dearly-beloved parent I was near two-and-twenty, consequently I was perfectly free from all control.

"We had resided chiefly in the country. A very sensible and worthy woman had superintended my education; and the only intimate companion I had of my own age was Miss Meredith, who had been married to baron P * * * about a twelvemonth before our journey to France: a few distant neighbours visited

sited us now and then ; but in general we lived extremely retired, particularly the last three years, when the health of my father grew daily impaired, to the period when the cruel policy of physicians, but too frequently practised, sent him abroad to die in a strange land.

“ Thus peculiarly and unfortunately situated, wonder not, my dear Elinor, that the presence of Mr. Boteler, in that afflictive hour of trial, was regarded by me as the merciful interference of Heaven to preserve me from despair.

“ He no longer thought of his journey to Montpellier ; but learning from the nurse who had attended us, and my late father’s valet, every circumstance that I have related to you, he felt so much for my unprotected state, that he instantly sent off an express to don Marcos, relating the events which would unavoidably prevent their meeting for the present.

“ I shall not trespass on your patience by retracing every particular conversation that passed between us. I knew it was my father’s wish to be buried in the vault with
his

his ancestors. Mr. Boteler so warmly pressed for leave to accompany me on my return to see performed the last melancholy duties, that though rigid prudence might have condemned my acquiescence, yet let my distress be considered, and humanity and candour must make great allowances, if not entirely acquit me.

“ I was so totally absorbed in grief, and a sense of my friendless, unconnected situation, that I saw not the impropriety of being attended by a young gentleman. I considered him as my guardian angel, without at that time a thought of his sex or my own.

“ In short, we travelled to England, without any cause of regret on my side for the silent permission I had given to admit him as a friend and brother. He accompanied me to the grave of my father; and though he had too much delicacy to think of residing under the same roof with me, yet he assisted me in settling my affairs as far as his knowledge extended.

“ After I had given up the estate, and employed proper persons to manage all

my pecuniary matters, I took a small house in the country, Mr. Boteler still my occasional visitor and my best friend, but not one syllable of a more tender interest escaped from his lips for more than four months after my return to England.

“ Nearly about that time I observed he grew very thin, pale, and melancholy ; and one day, deeply concerned, I could no longer refrain from marking to him the alteration in his person and disposition.

“ He blushed, hesitated, and at length stammered out, ‘ that he was honoured by the notice I took of a dejection he could assign no cause for, or in any way shake off ; he was rather of opinion that the air of England was not favourable to his health, and as I had now no further occasion for his services, as he had the pleasure of seeing *my* health and spirits restored, he believed it would be most salutary for the purpose of regaining *his*, that he should return to France.’

“ ‘ Ah, my God !’ I ingenuously and incautiously exclaimed, ‘ if you leave me I am undone, without a friend in the world ;
what

what will become of me?' For a moment his eyes brightened and his features were animated; but presently they sunk again, and he answered very gravely—'It is impossible that Miss Hales should ever want friends. You live too much secluded from the world,' added he; 'you are formed to grace society, and ought to mix with people of rank in the capital, where merit like yours cannot fail of meeting with warm friends and a numerous train of admirers, from among whom you may select some happy man to be the blest companion of your future days.'

"I burst into tears; my answer I cannot repeat; but in short, my feelings discovered the secret of my heart, and my evident distress overpowered him so much, that novice as he was, and guarded, as he struggled to be, in his expressions, I no longer doubted but that it was the violence of his passion, and the ineffectual endeavours he had used to conquer it, from the most generous motives, that had occasioned the alteration in his person.

"I assure

“ I assure you that after this mutual discovery I had no small trouble to get over the scruples which generosity, and, what I termed, romantic refinement, raised in his bosom against taking advantage of my favourable sentiments. The sum he possessed exceeded not eight thousand pounds, and for that he was indebted to the liberal and noble-minded don Marcos: this sum, the gift of generosity, was so inadequate to my sixty thousand, that to conquer his objections and too scrupulous delicacy, I was obliged to sacrifice my own.

“ In short, I subdued an unseasonable pride that militated against happiness, and enjoyed the triumph of making him amends for the injustice of fortune and the misfortunes of his family.

“ At the expiration of six months from the death of my father we were married, and by mutual consent set off to make the tour of Europe. We resided near four years in Naples, besides occasional residences in other parts of Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. Within the first year our beloved Edward was born; I had three other

other children, but none that lived above six months.

“ We also paid a visit to Don Marcos, my husband’s best friend and benefactor; he was happily recovered, and married to a lady of the first rank. My lord and he correspond to this hour, and he will be the first to hear of our happy success.

“ About eighteen months ago we resolved to visit England; not with any intention of living in it, for Italy was our favourite country. Travelling through France, my lord wished to stop at St. Omer, and inquire after his old friend father Joseph, though he scarcely expected to find him living. Great was his joy on being told that he was still in being. We were all introduced to him, and when my lord announced himself as Mr. Boteler, and pressed the venerable man in his arms, I thought he would have expired with transport.

“ Devoutly he returned thanks to Heaven, and then extended his arms to me, whom he eyed with inexpressible delight. ‘ O ! ’ said he, ‘ how have I longed,

and how despaired of ever seeing you more. Months and years I vainly hoped your return. Unhappily I had forgotten the name of your Spanish friend, though we endeavoured to find him out; but our inquiries were fruitless. My dear son,' added he, to my lord, 'the ways of Heaven are just; the machinations of the wicked may sometimes succeed, but in its own proper time, Providence will bring their evil deeds to light.'

" 'What is it you mean?' asked my lord.—'That your papers are found, which your wicked aunt had secreted; and that William, the servant of your father so many years ago, supposed to have been killed, is, I hope, at this present hour alive, and capable of giving such testimony, as will, I humbly trust, through the conducting hand of God, restore you to your just rights.'

"We were equally astonished and affected by the good man's words, not able to conceive their import. He hastened from us, and soon returned with another venerable man, each of them having a roll of paper.

paper. The latter rejoiced to see my lord, and giving him the parcel, told him,

“ ‘ That about six years previous to our visit, *be*, as superior of the college, received a letter from monsieur St. Amand, informing him, that his lady had been some time dead, and in looking over her effects he had met with two parcels of papers, which, on perusing, he well remembered had been written for by her nephew, who had been supposed dead, and likewise an application for them had been made by our college.

“ ‘ Until that moment, he said, he knew not that they had ever been in the possession of his wife, and as it was possible we might at some time or other discover the legal heirs of the late earl of B * *, he should transmit the papers to us. In fine, my son,’ concluded the father, ‘ here are those important documents, that will, I hope, restore you to the rights of your ancestors.’

“ ‘Tis impossible to paint to you, my dear Elinor, our surprise; but I shall not dwell on the particulars that passed; we

rejoiced that our son was not present, he was engaged with his preceptor monsieur Fernis; and as there existed a possibility my lord might never recover his inheritance, we thought it most prudent to conceal from Edward that he had any such expectancies, and to make privately all proper inquiries previous to any petitions, &c. It was now that I recollected my juvenile companion Miss Meredith, who had been many years married to baron P * * *, whose interest might possibly be of infinite service to us.

“ We were extremely anxious to see the old and faithful servant William, who, the fathers told us, resided some months back with an old marquis, a few miles from St. Omer, as his steward; but had been a prisoner nine years, and was then transported to New Spain to work there.

“ He resided a long time in Quito, till he was sent, with some others, in a vessel to a different port. They were overtaken by a storm, and, after beating about several days, were thrown on an island belonging

to the French, where his present master, the marquis, was governor. They were humanely treated; and William having one day recounted all his adventures, (of which I have briefly spoken,) they reached the ears of the governor, who sent for him, and from that hour he retained him in his household.

“ Little more than two years since, the marquis returned from his government to his paternal seat; and having experienced the fidelity of William, and also in consideration of his age, he made him his steward, and treated him more like a friend than a domestic.

“ On William’s arrival in this neighbourhood, he hastened to the college; and the poor fellow wept bitterly to hear the subsequent misfortunes of a family so dear to him—greatly surprised to hear that his master had survived the engagement, and that he had lived to have a son as unfortunate as himself.

“ ‘ We could give him no clue to trace you, having been unsuccessful in all our inquiries,’ said father Joseph;—‘ now,

if the poor fellow lives, how great will be his transport !'

" We were much affected, dear Elinor, by this recital of a faithful attachment, and the fathers promised to send for William the following day, to meet us at the college, as we wished to see him previous to his introduction to Edward.

" We left the good fathers with grateful hearts, and on our return to the inn, my dear lord embraced me with ecstasy— ' Now,' said he, ' I feel happy indeed, to know myself not unworthy of my dear Ann by birth and connexions; to have a prospect of raising her to a rank she will adorn, and a fortune she so generously forfeited to make me happy, and which, in her hands, will be a blessing to hundreds.

" ' To see our beloved Edward advanced to dignity, and giving grace to dignity by innate nobleness of heart. O! my dear Ann! I am, indeed, inexpressibly happy.'

" ' Pray,' said I, ' moderate your transports, if you please; the earl of B * * will not be a jot more worthy, more deserving

serving of respect in my eyes, than Mr. Boteler has ever been since the day we were happily united.

“ ‘ Rank, titles, or riches, can add nothing to my perfect content; and were it not a duty that we owe to our son to claim hereditary rights, which he so well deserves, I would not wish you to give yourself one anxious thought about it.

“ ‘ However, let us not give him hopes that may prove fallacious: if we succeed, the surprise will enhance the value of the acquisition; and should we fail in proofs, or the hand of power refuse to recognise your just claims, he will be spared the mortification of a disappointment.’

“ I will not tell you my lord’s answer; you would laugh at the gallantry of forty-three, after one-and-twenty years’ marriage. Thank Heaven, except the common incidents that happen to every one, and occasional fits of illness, not one cloud has hung over us since the happy day when our destinies were united.

“ The following day we had an interview with William, and not a dry eye was

among us for the space of some minutes. Oh! what a noble soul may sometimes inhabit the bosom of a peasant! This trusty affectionate old man stole all our hearts, and 'beguiled us of our tears.'

"It was his wish to live and die with us; yet he confessed he owed much to his present master. The marquis wished to see us, and we promised to wait on him. Happily Edward was so thoroughly engaged with monsieur Fernis, in visits and amusements suitable to his years, that he expressed no curiosity relative to our proceedings: we took him one day to the college, and the good fathers were highly gratified by his affectionate politeness.

"We went to visit the marquis, who received us with the most respectful attention. William had without reserve acquainted him with our history; he said he had some interest in the court of England, which should be at our service. He confessed we had a prior right to William, and those rights he was not disposed to contest, though accustomed to the worthy man's attentive kindness; it was a loss at
his

his time of life that could never be repaired.

He said this with tears in his eyes.

“ The worthy creature fell at his feet, actually sobbing. ‘ No, my honoured master, no ; your old servant will *not* forsake you ; we will wind up our days together. I am old, and should be useless in a younger family : you condescend to bear with me, to treat me as a companion ; you regret my poor services : I am bound by every tie of duty and of gratitude to devote my life to you.

“ ‘ The family of my dear old lord and master are near to my heart ; I would draw the last drop of my blood to serve them ; but I can serve *them at a distance*. You, my second generous lord and master, *you* have claims by every tie that can bind an honest man, to my faithful duty to the end of my life ; and may God grant me life no longer than whilst I am obedient to the *wishes* of so good a master.’

“ We were extremely affected ; the marquis condescended to take his hand ; ‘ And will you,’ said he to my lord, ‘ will you relinquish this worthy man to my

wishes?—‘My lord,’ answered he, ‘I have no claims but those of affection and gratitude, in both of which you are my superior: his attachment to my family has made me *his debtor*: you, my lord, have conferred on him the highest obligations; he therefore distinguishes right in giving you a preference; which you are justly entitled to, and which gives him additional merit in my eyes.’

“The worthy creature could not stand this; he left the room, saying, ‘O, how much you both honor your old servant! may God Almighty shower down his blessings on both families!’ The tears fell in large drops on his cheeks.—Forgive my prolixity, my sweet Elinor; I am now drawing toward a conclusion of this long story.

“In a short time we left France, arrived in England, and took a small house in a village about twenty miles from London, thinking it best to remain quiet and unknown until we had obtained all proper information.

“I wrote to lady P * * *, who was unluckily on the eve of a journey to the Spa;

Spa; but kindly assured me of her lord's interest, and requested that the requisite papers might be forwarded to his lordship directly, and that we would, without scruple, make use of his influence.

"After a minute, though private inquiry, we learnt that Mr. Masham was living and resided with the countess, in whose favour the sequestration had been taken off, and the title allowed to her in prejudice to the male heirs, over whom the attainder still remained in full force.

"The result of this information, my lord's journey here, his letters and meetings with Mr. Masham, I believe you are well acquainted with.

"We had some difficulty to keep the grand secret from Edward; and more to prevail on him to comply with Mr. Masham's request, and live in a secluded and clandestine manner repulsive to his noble spirit. He submitted however, and, thank Heaven! is not only rewarded for the temporary uneasiness he suffered, but gratefully acknowledges the kind motives by

which we were actuated to save him from apprehended disappointment.

“ Beyond our hopes, the papers we recovered from France, the testimony of William, father Joseph, and Don Marcos, were allowed as sufficient proofs to establish his claims; and the powerful and friendly interference of baron P * * * succeeded in getting the attainder taken off at the very time your letter came to hand; but I assure you, had the countess still existed, no attempts would have been made to dispossess her, or to have given her the least interruption.”

“ Thus, my dear Elinor, I have gone through my dear lord’s eventful history, which, on relation, appears extraordinary and romantic, but is in every point strictly true; and on some future day you will hear his adventures in Lima, which are not less uncommon, though not material for me to relate.

“ Among the blessings that surround me, not the least in my estimation is the pleasure

pleasure of your society ; since you are little less dear to me than were you my own child. Heaven bless you, my sweet girl ! and may your happiness equal my wishes.

“ ANN B * * .”

This long memoir cost Elinor a sleepless night ; for when it was delivered to her, she retired early to her apartment, and as she went on, found it so interesting to her feelings, that she could not resolve to break off, but sat up the best part of the night to read it through. Edward was now lord L * * *, he was gone a long journey, she knew not *how* far, but yet he undoubtedly would return some time, and she should see him again. 7

The more she reflected on her own mysterious story, the events in the north tower, and the *adventures* of lord B * * and his father ; the more she was confirmed in her belief, that the extraordinary stories in her “ *Cassandra, Grand Cyrus,*” and such like books, were all realities, though her father, as she always called
Mr.

Mr. Masham, had often said they were fabulous.

There is no occasion for fiction, thought she, to relate uncommon events, since this memoir, and my own "*ill starr'd destiny*," (an expression always present to her mind,) furnish sufficient evidence that no occurrences, however extraordinary, are impossible to happen.

With this belief she indulged the flights of a lively imagination; Lord L * * * was the hero of her romance, and she completed her castle-building by seeing herself his wife, and in possession of all possible fairy happiness.

After raising this fabric, and enjoying for a few moments the delightful illusion of her senses, and having strained her fancied bliss to the utmost stretch; she suddenly plunged from the summit, to the gulph of despair, by the single reflection—
"I know not who I am; I have parents who will not own me, who cast me from them without *even a name*!"

This idea perpetually clouded the naturally cheerful mind of Elinor, whose only
resource

resource from inquietude was in the society of the kind countess.

The day came, on which the expected guests of the Douglas family, and some other neighbours, were to make their first visit. The countess would have persuaded Elinor to have her style of dress made more fashionable; but on the trial of some ornaments, she found them so troublesome that she begged leave to retain her own simple mode of attire, though she allowed of the fabric being of a superior fineness to what she had been accustomed.

After the first ceremonials on the arrival of the company, Elinor's curious eyes wandered over them with equal surprise and admiration. 'Tis our place to introduce these great personages to the reader, who has been long enough intruded upon by the poor, illiterate domestics of the castle, and its artless, uninformed heroine.

Sir William Douglas was about five-and-fifty, descended from a noble race of ancestors, whose names grace the annals of their country, and whose virtues and heroic deeds were the admiration of successive generations.

nerations. He lived not to disgrace the name he bore, yet without adding any brilliancy to the house of Douglas; though his private virtues entitled him to the love and reverence of all his numerous clan.

He was a good husband and an indulgent father; proud, but not passionate, he scorned a mean or an unjust abuse of his power over the poor tenantry, though he scrupulously exacted that respect due to his birth and the custom of the country. In short, he had but one foible, (how few are there that can say so much!) which was, the pride of ancestry; and his highest boast was, that his children had both spirit and abilities to support the family consequence.

Lady Douglas was a descendant, by the female line, from the house of Stuart; by her father's side, from the Gordons. Her fortune had been small, but her noble descent gave her all the advantages that were necessary; nor was she a little conscious of her claims to distinction and respect. In fact, she had all the family pride of sir William, without any of his virtues. Haughty, avaricious, a determined foe to beauty and merit,

merit, malignant, curious, an ill-natured observer, and a satirical commentator upon the behaviour and actions of others, who appeared to attract either respect or esteem.

Miss Douglas, near five-and-twenty, was not inelegant either in her person or manners; both were indebted to Nature, and had received the polish of two visits to London, and an introduction at court. But those advantages which had greatly increased the lady's consequence at home, had added much to the excessive arrogance of her temper.

Superior, in her own opinion, to every other female within her knowledge, she beheld, with the most disgusting disdain, every object who had the smallest pretensions to beauty and merit; and to a heart equally malignant as her mother's, she joined a superior cunning, a determined perseverance in any point she was resolved to adopt, without any drawbacks from modesty, good-nature, or decorum.

Mr. Douglas was the counterpart of his father; a high idea of his birth and consequence; but his natural pride softened by

by a real goodness of heart, a benevolent disposition, and a judicious and warm admiration of beauty and talents, whoever were the possessors.

Two brothers, of the name of Johnstone, were added to the family party, but as those gentlemen had nothing singular in their persons or characters, they require no particular description.

On their entrance, Sir William and the earl having exchanged morning visits previous to this meeting, lord B * * introduced lady Douglas and her family to the countess, and then to Miss Masham, whom they had before heard of as a parson's daughter with a small fortune, bequeathed by the late countess.

To lady B * * they behaved with a dignified politeness, that bespoke their own consequence; but poor Elinor was overlooked by a very small bend of their necks, though the moment they were seated, their eyes were so riveted on her with a proud and disdainful stare, that she, perfectly unused to so rude a scrutiny, felt a painful confusion, that, heightening
the

the "maiden blush" upon her cheeks, gave an additional brilliancy both to her eyes and complexion, and rendered her an object of still greater dislike to the malignant gazers.

After the customary congratulations and compliments, the worthy baronet, looking round with a cheerful smile, "Upon my word," said he, "I did not know we had such a rose-bud in our neighbourhood as your young friend there; why, her complexion outvies the lilies and roses in our garden."

"The *roses*, if you please, sir William; they indeed *are* far behind; the deep red of the young person's cheeks you allude to, is something similar to our ruddy Highland peasants." A sarcastic sneer accompanied these words from lady Douglas, which raised the indignation of the counts; and, before sir William could reply, she said, "The beautiful complexion of Miss Masham is her least perfection, sir William; and, were not my amiable young friend present, I should be profuse in my eulogiums on her *mind*; but this I can

can assure you, her merits are not merely personal."

The whole of these observations were so new to Elinor, who had never heard a word relative to the beauty of her person, or been at all accustomed either to compliments or the malicious sneers of fine ladies, that she was not conscious the visitors designed to affront her, and was only sensible that lady B * * spoke of her with kindness and partiality. She bowed to her, therefore, without feeling the particular design of lifting her into consequence.

The earl, displeased with lady Douglas, took upon him to add, "My late aunt, Sir William, confined from society not less by inclination than by infirmities, had a treasure in this young lady, and her truly respectable father, that amply supplied the place of visitors who could only amuse the passing hour. We are still more fortunate, favoured by the company of Miss Masham, and surrounded by good neighbours, I hope we shall have little to regret in leaving the pleasures of the Continent to fix our residence here."

"O, my

"O, my lord," exclaimed Miss Douglas, "I fear you will experience much disappointment; we are horridly dull; I am incessantly importuning my father to reside in London; there indeed one may find a few associates in rank, and partake of a thousand pleasurable amusements: but here, vegetating on one's own grounds, and surrounded only by one's own vassals, with now and then a visit of formal courtesy: O, how stupidly do we pass our lives!"

"If you have cause to regret *your* situation, Miss Douglas," said her brother, who wanted to hear the sound of Elinor's voice, "think what this young lady must have endured in her solitary confinement. If we have heard right, Miss," added he, addressing himself to her, "you never extended your views beyond the boundaries of the park during the life of the late countess?"

"Your information has been just, sir," answered Elinor modestly, but unembarrassed; "from my childhood I was accustomed to think the extent of the park all that

that was desirable, or proper *for me to see*; my best friends did not exceed its bounds; and I could have no curiosity, because I had no conception of places or objects I never heard of."

"What strange ignorance!" cried Miss Douglas; "so you really grew up like a cabbage in the garden, that was only transplanted from one corner to another in its own soil: taught to spin, and read the Bible, I suppose, you could learn little else?"

"I cannot boast of my acquirements, madam," replied Elinor; "but I had a very able instructor in the best of men. He did not indeed teach me the knowledge of a world to which I was a stranger; but his precepts were such as to inculcate all the moral duties, and learn me to be contented with the situation in which I was placed."

"O, Heaven!" cried lady Douglas, "a female puritan! but, pray, turn from the subject and this parson-like Miss. Dear lady B * *, I expect to have some delightful conversations and informations
from

from you. You lived long in Italy and France, I hear. How greatly I envy you such advantages!" She run on a string of questions, whilst the earl and the gentlemen fell into the usual topics, politics, and the good of their country.

Mr. Douglas said but little; his eyes were riveted on Elinor; he had never seen so lovely a girl; a character so new, so unadulterated by the world; and yet with such an expressive countenance as plainly spoke an intelligent mind. When she answered Miss Douglas, he blushed for his sister; how superior did this little girl appear to the fine lady.

Birth and rank, thought he, could add nothing to this young woman to make her more amiable, though it would make her more distinguished. What a pity that she has not such a passport to the world as would entitle her to a brilliant establishment!

He sighed; it was the last sigh of expiring pride; for every moment he "looked to love;" and, when the visit ended, he no longer considered that Elinor
had

had neither rank nor title, but concluded without reserve that she was the most charming of her sex, and that he should be the happiest man in the world to be blest with such a companion for life.

Sir William, who had no idea that a son of his could degenerate so greatly from his ancestors as to think of marrying an obscure girl, without friends or fortune; yet had discernment to see the merits of Elinor shining through what he called her humble situation; very freely called her "a charming young creature, and a great acquisition to lady B * *, as she had no daughter."

The first words were repeated by both the ladies with a contemptuous laugh: to the latter part lady Douglas replied, "I think very differently; lady B * * is extremely wrong to make such a girl her companion, much more to introduce her into company so very superior that the creature is quite out of her sphere, and very likely to have her head turned by such fulsome ridiculous praises."

"Yes,"

"Yes," added Miss, "the girl having been brought up humbly, and quite a recluse, with a few hundreds, as I suppose, she *may* have, and, with her mighty queer notions, would have been better provided for as a school-mistress to teach the village children to read and knit; that seems the proper line for her."

"I declare," returned my lady, "an excellent thought; and the first time I see lady B * * I will advise her to pursue your bright idea, Miss Douglas."

"I don't see," said sir William, "that you have any right to advise in the affair; as a clergyman's daughter, there is no disgrace in being in her company; and, as a pretty, modest-looking, well-behaved girl, she is entitled to civility: but I do not want to have her a companion for Miss Douglas, nor should she be treated like a lady of birth."

"No indeed," cried Miss, pursuing the weak prejudice of her father; "one ought to discriminate between persons of birth, and those who have no pretensions to respect; therefore I gave her no invitation to Douglas Castle."—"Nor did I,"

added her ladyship; "I certainly shall never request the *honour* of *her* company here."

Sir William, whose first effusions in favour of the poor Elinor proceeded from good-nature, without any particular interest, other than a transient admiration of her fine complexion, chose to drop the subject, by regretting that lord L * * * was not of the party. "What the young man may be," said he, "I know not; but if as clever as his parents, I think he would make an excellent match for Arabella; the estates are contiguous, and the family, if not so ancient as *ours*, is yet old and respectable."

"I wish he may prove deserving of Miss Douglas," replied her ladyship; "she has a right to expect the first rank in her country."

"But people's expectations are not always realized," said Mr. Douglas; "and really, at Arabella's age, she ought not to be *very unreasonable*." This mal-à-propos observation drew both mother and daughter upon him, who rang the changes so merrily on the word "age," that he was obliged

obliged to fly from the scene to his own apartment, where the image of Elinor followed him, and found a welcome retreat in his bosom.

Mean time the earl and countess, by no means pleased with the insufferable pride and haughtiness of lady Douglas and her daughter, found a most agreeable relief from a tedious visit in the conversation of Elinor. "Pray, my dear," said the countess, "favour us with your opinion of our late visitors; persons and characters so new to you must furnish you with many new and striking ideas. First, What think you of sir William and his lady?"—"Indeed, madam," replied she, "I am but ill-qualified to form, much less to give, an opinion of persons I know so little of; but I am sensible they are very different characters from those I have the honour to see before me."

"How different, my dear? speak freely; I know you will be sincere; and I would sooner trust to the judgment of pure nature in some points, than to the most cultivated knowledge of the world. In what essentials, dear Elinor, were we different?"

ferent? I know you are superior to flattery; and I assure you we cannot be offended."

"Since you oblige me to speak, madam, I think sir William a good-tempered, obliging gentleman, who thinks very highly of his title and high birth; yet I do not believe he could be brought to use any one ill because they are inferior to him. I have read that high descent ennobles the mind, and that it likewise impels noble persons to assist and support those who are *unfortunate*, or less gifted by Heaven than themselves.

"Such a worthy mind I think sir William has; but yet he can never confer favours with such grace as my lord B * * does. When he speaks kindly, there is something which I call lofty, though perhaps that is not a proper word; something in his air that demands your gratitude, but does not gain your affection.

"I am afraid I explain my meaning very badly," added she; "but the whole is, I feel an awe and respect for him; but that's all.

"As

“As to lady Douglas, O, my dear madam! what an angel did you appear to her, and how foolish have I been to suppose that all ladies of high birth and fortune must be like you.

“How stiff, how haughty, how disdainful her looks! I never till this day understood the word *disdainful*: whilst lady Douglas was here, I *felt it* to my heart. Ah! if she was sensible how disagreeable it makes her, how encumbered she looked with such a heap of finery; how it makes one shrink from her when she tosses her head so high, looking down with half-closed eyes and a side-look upon the simple Elinor, as if one was some noxious animal she was afraid of.

“I am sure had a glass been held before her, and she had cast her eyes towards you, the proud lady would have been humbled indeed; and to have been respected she must look like lady B * *. Fear and disgust is what my heart feels for lady Douglas.”

“Upon my word, Miss Masham, you are excellent in describing your feelings;

I see unadulterated nature is the best guide, and the surest criterion to judge from. Well, go on, my love : Miss Douglas comes forward next."—"O," cried Elinor, "how very handsome she is ! I had no idea any one could be so beautiful, though I had read so many descriptions of charming persons ; I could have looked at her for ever, had not her eyes forbid me ; indeed she is very charming, if she were but a little more obliging ; but I dare say that haughty reserved air has been contracted to keep her numerous suitors at a distance, for certainly she must have many adorers."

The earl and countess smiled at her rhapsody. "You smile," said she ; "I suppose I express myself foolishly ; well, all I can say then of Miss Douglas is, that she is very beautiful, very majestic, and looks fit to be a princess. I could never be free with her : I might reverence and admire her ; but to love seems too free an idea for the distance between her and me.

"As to Mr. Douglas, he is also very handsome, very obliging ; and there is in
his

his manner something of the kind and condescending air of my lord B * *: if he does not draw so much admiration as his sister, neither does he inspire so much awe and distance. I think him good-humoured, like his father; and I dare say he is a very good son, if I may be free to judge from his looks and behaviour.

“Of the other gentlemen I can say nothing; I saw nothing particular to notice, after examining and forming my opinion of the others. If I am wrong, my dear lady, have the goodness to set me right.”

“Indeed,” replied the countess, “I feel proud, my dear Elinor, that my sentiments and judgment so exactly correspond with yours; the surest criterion to me that my opinions are not erroneous, since they coincide with observations from nature. I am equally gratified by comparisons so greatly in our favor, as pleased with your candid admiration of Miss Douglas. She really *is* handsome; I wish she may have generosity and frankness like yours, and

be as ready to acknowledge the merit of others."

"I like fir William and his son greatly," said the earl, "and shall be happy to cultivate their acquaintance; the young man will be an excellent companion for our Edward when he returns. Of the ladies, we will speak when we know more of them."

An involuntary sigh forced its passage from the bosom of Elinor; at the name of Edward, the Douglas's were all forgotten, and lord L * * * now occupied every thought; for handsome as Mr. Douglas was, in her opinion he fell very short of the interesting Edward; on that name she loved to dwell, as softer and more endearing than lord L * * *.

She had fallen into a momentary reverie, from which she was instantly roused, as if by electricity, upon lady B * * 's saying, "If Miss Douglas should improve upon acquaintance, I should not be sorry to see her the wife of Edward, though at present I do not admire the mother; perhaps
when

when the young lady gets familiar, and unbends from the dignity of family pride on a first interview, she may grow infinitely more agreeable."

" 'Tis early days," returned the earl, " to think of an affair of so much importance, though certainly such an alliance would not be disagreeable to me." Elinor had drawn in her breath, and listened with an undescribable agitation to those few words between her friends: a heavy sigh she could not suppress followed the earl's last words; fortunately it did not reach their ears, but she was now entirely unfit to continue in conversation; she therefore rose to quit the room.

" Are you going to leave us, Miss Masham?" asked the countess. — " If you please, madam," returned Elinor. — " Whatever is most agreeable to you, my love," said the kind lady, " must please me: I dare say you are fatigued with your new entertainment of visitors." Elinor made a slight reply, and hastened to her old retirement, the study; there

she could freely ruminate on the past, and indulge romantic ideas on the future.

She sat down low and dispirited—
“What ails me?” said the artless girl;
“I feel a weight in my bosom; a strange inquietude I cannot account for, nor have now any fresh cause for. What has occasioned this sudden illness?”—The question was soon answered, when she recalled the few words that passed relative to “Edward.”

“How!” cried she, when the conviction flashed upon her mind, “is it possible that I am disordered because ’tis probable lord L * * * will marry Miss Douglas? is she not beautiful; do I not wish him happy? Certainly I do. But ah! he will then be a stranger to me.—No, no; I feel, I must confess, I do not wish he may marry Miss Douglas. Yet *she has parents* noble and affectionate—the poor Elinor has no one to own *her*, she is an outcast. O, my dear, dear Mr. Masham! why did you reveal so much, without being at liberty to disclose all? why not leave me in happy
5 ignorance,

ignorance, and believe myself the child of so worthy a man?"

Torrents of tears fell from the eyes of poor Elinor, her mind was heavily oppressed, and the desire nearest to her heart that morning for the return of lord L * * * now ceased to engross her wishes; for he would see the charming Miss Douglas, be received as her husband; and she should lose him from the castle, and be for ever deprived of his company and conversation.

Whilst Elinor passed a sleepless night in painful retrospections, and still more wounding apprehensions, the son of sir William Douglas was not less disquieted on her account. Until he saw and heard Elinor, no female had given him a single hour's uneasiness: he had been transiently wounded by the little blind god in the course of his travels; but he had known the sweets of love without any mixture of its bitters, for his wounds were soon healed either by kindness, absence, or a new face.

But in this artless, amiable fair one, at the castle, he beheld a new being, so to-

tally unlike the fashionable females in high life, and so greatly superior to persons in a middling class, that he was lost in admiration and wonder.

Mr. Douglas, as may naturally be supposed, proud of his birth and fortune, travelling with all the advantages of such claims, which were not diminished by the tenor of his conduct, found himself a welcome and respected visitor every where.

That self-consequence which had early been engrafted, and formed the principal feature in his character, was happily by him turned to the most beneficial purposes: it preserved him from the infection of vice, improper companions, and such actions as might fix any sort of disgrace on the family name. The poet says,

“Pride saves men oft, and women too, from falling.”

That proper pride had Mr. Douglas; and when its effects were so honorable, it would be unjust to scrutinize too severely into the motives from whence they originated.

He was remarkably attached to his father, whose real goodness of heart he truly revered.

revered. He was fond of his mother and affectionate to his sister, but he was not blind to the defects of their temper; and well knew the haughty malignant disposition of the latter had hitherto been repulsive to any offers which she might have otherwise received.

Mr. Douglas was only a few weeks returned from the continent, with a heart perfectly free, and not the smallest apprehensions that he should so soon receive any impression that seemed likely to cause him much future inquietude. He was too well acquainted with the sentiments of his family, to indulge the least hope that they would receive the daughter of an "obscure country parson," as a daughter or a sister to the house of Douglas; and the passion he had so suddenly conceived, was too refined, too honourable, for him to form one wish of degrading its object by any improper connexion.

The following morning after this eventful visit, Mr. Douglas appeared at B * * castle to inquire after its inmates. He could not practise the self-denial that suggested

gested the danger of a second interview ; but, following the first impulse, surprised lady B * * and Elinor at their morning employments. As both ladies were much pleased with him, he met with a very flattering reception ; and the earl was still more pleased with the familiar call, than the formal visit.

He entered into a long and spirited conversation, in which Elinor occasionally joined, when on subjects within her knowledge ; and it was surprising to her friends the very rapid progress she had made under the instructions of the countess, who, indeed, had spared no pains to inform her of the customs and manners of the world, and to enlighten her natural good understanding in such points as her recluse life and narrow education had heretofore made her entirely unacquainted with.

The information she gleaned was all in theory indeed, and she frequently reflected on what she heard with such wonder as would have staggered credibility from any other than her amiable friend. Her mind however grew more capacious, her ideas
were

were enlarged, and her knowledge considerably extended; and to the already prejudiced mind of Mr. Douglas, she appeared a prodigy both of beauty and good sense. He grew every moment more enslaved. But alas! love and despair were concomitant in his bosom in the same moment; and the pride of ancestry yielded to the regret that his family, friends, interest, and prudence, all militated against a union that would have made him the happiest of mankind.

The hours had passed unheeded, and he was ashamed of the length of his visit; the earl however thanked him, and requested he would at all times call upon them without ceremony, mentioning, that he every hour expected baron P * * * and his family, which he hoped would be a further inducement to him soon to repeat his visit.

“No, my lord,” replied Mr. Douglas, with a sigh, and a conscious blush in his cheek; “no, I can meet with no superior attractions than I find in this company,

pany, and shall, with pleasure, avail myself of your polite invitation."

He left the castle under a variety of conflicting ideas. Baron P * * * had a son, whose character he was no stranger to, and from him he had every thing to dread as a rival. That he could behold Elinor without love, he thought, was not in the chapter of possibilities; and should his profligate temper receive a check from this modest, artless young woman, should passion prompt him to marry her, there was not that haughty, fastidious family pride in baron P * * * 's family, that might revolt against a union with the daughter of a clergyman, and the friend of lady B * *.

Thus overwhelmed with perplexities and distracting ideas, he returned to Douglas castle under the deepest dejection.

Mean time the family he had quitted were warm in his praise; the earl longed, he said, for the return of his Edward to have a companion whose disposition seemed to be so similar with his own.

"I confess,"

"I confess," added he, "however happy I shall be to see the baron and lady P * * *, the character of their son Mr. Tudor has so little to recommend him, that it will be no small tax on my gratitude to permit an intimacy between him and Edward; and should he, as I suppose he will, accompany the baron, I could almost wish the other may not return till the visit is ended."

Elinor had just retired to make a small alteration in her dress; the countess therefore replied, "'Tis not only for Edward that I dread Mr. Tudor's visit, but for our sweet Elinor, the most pleasing and ingenuous of human beings. I shall, by and by, prepare her to expect a character, that I think, in justice, I ought to expose to her in its true colours.

"We know him not personally, I confess, yet what we heard of him, and the little my dear lady P * * * has mentioned to me of her family discomforts, warrants us to conclude his character will not stand the test of inquiry; and a lovely
girl

girl like our young friend, so unacquainted with the mask of deception, may be fascinated by the personal endowments, and an artful, designing tongue, without such previous information as may guard her heart and strengthen her mind; for as to a wife, neither he nor his father would condescend to receive her, nor would I wish it, though such a union must be greatly above Elinor's expectations."

"Expectations, I believe, she has formed none," answered the earl; "but until the mystery of her birth is developed, we can have little hope that it is such as may entitle her to marry into a noble family. I confess I think her birth illegitimate; and though that cannot detract from her real merits, yet the prejudice of the world, cruelly unjust in my opinion as it is, will think otherwise."

"She is so entirely unknown," returned the countess, "that I see not why she may not always be considered as the real daughter of Mr. Masham."—"That must depend on contingent circumstances," he replied:

replied: "she is truly amiable, and whatever may be her origin, her character will always command esteem and respect."

The same evening, when the countess and her young companion were walking round the garden, invited by the brightness of the moon in a clear frosty night, the former took occasion to say, "We now every hour expect a letter from baron or lady P * * *, to announce their intended visit. I shall be truly happy to see the friend of my youth; and gratitude demands from us every attention towards her husband, whose unwearied exertions certainly facilitated, if not entirely procured, the restoration of our rights."

"I feel it a duty however, dear Elinor, to give you a sketch of the baron's, and also of his son's characters, such as we heard them pourtrayed while we were in London, and such as I have some cause to think, from lady P * * *'s letters, were not greatly overcharged."

"The baron is between forty and fifty, was in his youth remarkably handsome, and is still extremely well-looking, with a noble

noble air and engaging countenance. His morals, I fear, have been always loose ; he had a very libertine character when he addressed Miss Meredith ; captivated by her beauty, which was universally admired, he gave up, to appearance, all his juvenile follies, and pursued her with unremitted assiduity.

“ Her family was ancient and her fortune immense, for she was an heiress : such advantages, with her other far greater endowments, entitled her to any match in the kingdom. The preliminaries were not long in adjusting ; he was an ardent lover, master of himself, and she was not insensible of his many claims to her notice. I saw him only twice ; they were soon married, and I lost my friend.

“ We corresponded constantly, until I left England with my father. I had occasion too soon to remark the change in her style, and that a melancholy air pervaded through her letters ; I was convinced she was not so happy as she deserved to be. At length she wrote that she was pregnant, and that this event had re-
stored

stored to her the affection of her husband, and brightened her future prospects.

“ On my arrival in England, previous to my marriage, I heard she had been brought to bed of a daughter, to the great disappointment of the baron, who had relapsed into all his former libertine pursuits.

“ When *I* married, and quitted my country, I wrote to her, but our correspondence was frequently interrupted from various causes whilst I was abroad; I heard, however, she had two more daughters, all of whom died, like the first, in their infancy; and at length Providence blest her with a son, who was the darling of his father, and promised to be a recompence for all her troubles.

“ For the last three years that I was on the continent our correspondence dropped; I hardly know through whose fault, as we accuse each other. When we came to England, I wrote immediately; she was going the following morning to the Spa; I saw her not, but through her kindness we obtained the baron's interest. The death of one in their party occasioned her
return

return sooner than was intended; she arrived in the same week that we came here.

“ Whilst we were in the neighbourhood of town, and my lord frequently at Truman’s, we heard that baron P * * * was the most dissipated nobleman about court, and extravagantly fond of women, though his son was now grown a man, indeed, I believe, about nineteen or twenty; a most unpardonable trait in the character of a man of his age, and a father.

“ Lady P * * *, it was said, I hope with exaggeration, wearied out by the indifference and ill-conduct of her lord, was now grown little less gay and extravagant than himself; and though her reputation was not impeached, yet her prudence was, as she was to all intents quite the fine lady—that is, in other words, my dear, a woman who is entirely neglectful of her domestic duties, and an associate with every dissipated, thoughtless character of both sexes.

“ Most heartily I hope this portrait is overcharged, for she is a wife and a mother. Alas! if she has feeling, she cannot
be

be a *fine lady*, for the son must be a constant source of sorrow and mortification; if half what is said of that very young man has its foundation in truth, he is a most contemptible being.

“ A handsome form, a specious appearance, attractive manners, cover a heart truly corrupt, principles the most abandoned and dangerous. A seducer of innocence, a gambler, a deceiver, void of integrity and honour—yet so plausible, that few persons have the resolution to throw him at a distance or reject his acquaintance.

“ The rank and influence of the father are the passports for his unworthy son, and give him easy admittance into every circle.

“ Unhappily we see every day the homage paid to virtue is merely heartfelt and silent: people have not the courage to applaud virtues that are neglected by the great; whilst unblushing vice boldly leads the way into notice, and attracts the *shew* of respect from the gaudiness of its appearance, when scorn and contempt are the real sentiments with which they are beheld;

beheld ; yet those sentiments are repressed by cowardice, interest, or perhaps a conscious sense in many, that their own lives will not bear the test of investigation.

“ Such, my dear, are the outlines of characters you will soon see : I must believe we shall find lady P * * * still amiable, and deserving of esteem. The baron and his son are entitled to *respect* ; yet, how is that expression inverted, how can we respect whom we do not esteem ? however, in the common commerce of the world, birth and titles challenge respect, and from us the baron is certainly entitled to our utmost attention.

“ You have had great patience, my dear girl, to hear me run on thus ; but it was to give you a just idea of persons, who will perhaps be very troublesome to you ; for I dare say, both the father and son will take all opportunities of telling you, that you are “ charming, an angel, a goddess,” and such ridiculous appellatives ; that they are violently in love with you ; and, in short, would triumph in creating vanity where they see it not, and
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in abusing a credulity that proceeds from innocence, unacquainted with vice.

“To guard you from such artful seducers, I have perhaps forfeited my candour, if not charity, in delineating characters, and raising a prejudice to their disadvantage before you see them.”

“Dearest! worthiest of ladies!” cried the enthusiastic Elinor, “how can I ever sufficiently acknowledge your kindness?—What a poor, ignorant, uninformed creature have you condescended to enlighten!—I am all astonishment at every thing I hear!—Happy is it for me that I have such a guide and monitors: what would have become of me had I been thrown into this strange world, novice as I was, credulous, weak, and unsuspecting!—O madam! to whom I am indebted for *life* I may *never* know; but to *you* I owe *more than* life, a knowledge that must preserve me from vice, and lead me by your example into the paths of virtue.”

Tears flowed from her eyes, whilst she kissed the kind hand that pressed hers with real affection. When they returned to the

house, and separated for the night, what a fund for meditation had Elinor!—When she reflected on the characters of the baron and his son, what a contrast were Lord B * * and his darling Edward to them.

“ My son,” said she, repeating the earl’s words, on which she often dwelt with rapture; “ my son has virtues that will dignify any rank.—Yes,” added she, “ were he the monarch of a mighty kingdom, he would govern with wisdom; he would reward the virtuous, pity the unfortunate, relieve the wretched, and punish the wicked and oppressor !”

This flight had no sooner escaped her, than she was recalled to reason, by recollecting that she had only *twice* spoken to this darling hero, and that possibly when she saw him again, he would be attending on Miss Douglas.—She began to reflect that the ladies of ancient times never indulged such sentiments even for their adorers, till after many services, many unequivocal proofs that they were beloved; whereas she had only one dear delightful letter,

letter, in which he told her, " she was charming, and that her image was enthroned in his bosom."

This letter was unfolded, and read half a dozen times with increased pleasure; but the last time, a thought struck her that threw a sudden gloom over her heart and countenance.—Why had she concealed this letter from her dear Lady B * *? It was disingenuous and artful;—she had no cause to blush at it, nor knew any reason for making it a secret; yet she had not been so explicit as she ought, and *why had she not?*

She was puzzled for an answer;—she began to think, to reflect; she grew thoughtful and unhappy.—Without intending any disingenuous proceeding, without knowing she did ill in having any reserves to her best friend; she was now sensible, from the expansion of her mind, that she had done wrong: her heart smote her, her reason reproved her.

But what could she do now, when so long a time had elapsed? Could she make a confession to the countess that must cover

her with confusion, and prove to that lady she had been capable of art and concealment? Oh! no;—she could not endure the idea of sinking in her estimation; of feeling herself humbled before her reproving eye.

Elinor had yet to learn, that to acknowledge a fault with a noble frankness, and a resolution of amendment, more than atones for the error that was committed through inadvertence, in which the heart had no share.

Timidity, and a dread of losing the esteem of the countess, made her suppress the impulse of virtuous frankness, and resolve to continue silent; though from that moment she would try to forget she had any secret she blushed to own.

Conforming to this idea, she instantly locked up the letter, determining to indulge herself no more in the reprehensible pleasure of reading what she was ashamed to acknowledge. A sigh escaped her; but she placed it to the score of self-reproach, and hoped it would be the last she should feel painful.

The

The following morning, while at breakfast, a servant arrived from Baron P * * *, with his master's compliments, and he hoped to be with them by their dinner hour.

"What!" said the earl, much surprised, "is your lord alone?"—"Yes, my lord," he replied; "my lady has company with her from Wales, and my young master is with a party at Bath; but proposes coming here a few days hence, as he has two other visits to pay in Scotland."

The countess was greatly disappointed when a letter was delivered from Lady P * * *, lamenting the impossibility of waiting on her at the promised time, by the unexpected arrival of friends from Wales.

The baron made his appearance some time before dinner, and was welcomed with the most flattering attention by the earl and countess, who strove by their manner to express the gratitude they felt for the important favours he had rendered them. He as warmly congratulated them on the

restitution of their rights, though he was concerned, he said, at the absence of Lord L * * *, as he had hoped to have introduced his son, Mr. Tudor, to him. They made a polite reply; but it was a circumstance of no regret to them that the meeting was postponed.

Just before the dinner was announced, Elinor came into the room and was introduced to the baron as Miss Masham: he was evidently much struck by her appearance. "Masham!" repeated he with surprise: "is the young lady any relation to the late clergyman of that name?"—"Of the same family, my lord," replied the countess; "and my much esteemed friend."—"I never heard he had any such relation," returned the baron; "but indeed 'tis some years past since I knew any thing of his family or concerns, though well acquainted with him formerly. Such a young lady, madam, must be a great acquisition to you in this part of the world."—"In *any* part of the world, my lord," replied the kind lady, "Miss Masham must confer honour
and

and pleasure by her society." The baron bowed at this half reproof, whilst Elinor's eyes glistened with delight.

At the dinner table the baron was placed opposite to her; and his ardent gaze, whenever she lifted her eyes, grew extremely painful to her: she thought him a fine, respectable looking man; but his looks disgusted her; and every time he addressed her, she felt a repugnance to answer, or hold any conversation with him.

In the afternoon he seated himself by her, and paid her a number of little attentions: sometimes he seemed lost in thought, then would suddenly utter some compliment to her; and once addressing Lady B * *, he said, "Upon my honor, I did not know that it was necessary to visit Scotland that one might behold perfection; I really do not recollect ever to have seen so lovely a young woman as Miss Masham."

The countess coolly replied, "she was proud of his approbation of her young friend." Elinor seemed insensible to the admiration she excited: her mind, prepossessed by the character of the baron, de-

rived no gratification from his praises; and her extreme indifference was not unnoticed by him, any more than his looks, thoughtfulness, and often disjointed conversation passed unremarked by the earl; who really felt uneasy, knowing the baron's predilection for handsome women, and his libertine principles respecting them.

When Elinor seized a moment to withdraw, he asked a hundred questions concerning her;—what were her accomplishments; had she learnt music, dancing, and drawing?—"Those acquirements," the countess replied, "had never been in the reach of Elinor; for having lived totally secluded from all company, and always a resident in the country, all the little embellishments of education were entirely unknown to her.

"Ah!" cried he, "how much to be lamented that such a rich jewel should be encrusted by rust, instead of receiving that polish which would ensure universal admiration."

"Pardon me, my lord," said the countess, "Miss Masham, though she has not
had

had *masters* in the polite accomplishments, is infinitely beholden to Nature. She has a very sweet voice, and much taste: she draws very prettily, better than many I have seen who *have had masters*, from her own natural genius: she is a good English and French scholar, from the instruction of her friend with whom she resided; added to which, she has an excellent heart, the purest sentiments both in religion and morality, and a frankness in disposition I never saw equalled."

"Upon my honour," exclaimed the baron, with a sort of doubtful smile, "a most extraordinary eulogium!—This wild flower, it seems, possesses all the beauty and fragrancy of high cultivation, without being indebted to art."—"Indeed," answered the earl, "I am not quite clear whether the polish of the world would not be more disadvantageous than profitable to Miss Masham."

"Impossible!" cried the baron. "She is not intended, I suppose, to remain here always as an appendage to the castle; and if she enters into society either in a de-
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pendent, †

pendent, or in a more liberal situation, she will find it highly requisite to have natural talents cultivated, as every one (smiling) may not have that passion for wild graces, and *uncultivated* sweets, such as the countess seems to entertain."

As the last words were pronounced, Elinor re-entered the apartment with an air of dignified mildness, if the expression may be allowed. The baron rose, caught her hand, and led her to her seat, with as much respect as if she had been a princess. She felt confused, and an unusual tremor pervaded her whole frame: she saw the eyes of her friends were fixed on her with a serious expression in them not common; this the more disconcerted her.

"My charming young lady," said the baron, standing before her, and endeavouring to retain her hand, which she hastily withdrew, "I had once the pleasure of knowing your relation well; and though I am sorry to confess that above twenty years have passed over my head since that time, I still remember him with regard.

"I beg,"

"I beg," added he, smiling, "that you will give me credit for being *then* in my juvenile years, though he was advanced in life. A tall awkward boy sometimes reminds me that I am not five-and-twenty; but when from that impertinent monitor I totally forget the rapid progress of time."

Elinor only smiled in reply, as if it was a matter of pleasantry; but the smile had in it a mixture of concern and contempt, as she thought it but too expressive of his character.

He continued, however, to attach himself closely to her, and asked if he might see the sketches of her pencil. "Pardon me, sir," said she, blushing, "my little efforts are the rude outlines of nature; when I have profited by the instructions of that dear lady," bowing to the countess, "possibly I may not be ashamed to produce them; at present you must have the goodness to excuse me."

"By Heaven!" cried he, "Nature has been lavish of her bounties to you, fair lady;—I hope, however, you will not deny me the favour of hearing your voice, as I

do not find there is any little convenient cold at hand for an excuse.”—“ If your lordship will take your seat by *me*,” said the countess, “ I have no doubt but Miss Masham will oblige us with a little song she has condescended to learn from me ; but she is not accustomed to be solicited by a stranger.”

The baron took the hint, and removed, though reluctantly ; and Elinor went through her song with some diffidence, and no great *good-will* : but it drew a rapturous flow of compliments from him, and a declaration that “ she must come to London, and have her talents improved ; that if she would favour Lady P * * * with a visit, he would have the first masters in England to teach her.”

Elinor was confused at his warmth of expression ;—the earl and countess displeased ;—but he, unheeding their emotions, added, “ Dear Lady B * *, oblige your friend with a visit from your protégée.”—“ Miss Masham is her own mistress, my lord,” answered she coldly ; “ we have neither right nor inclination to decide for her.”

“ Well, then,” said he, “ Miss Masham, I solicit the favour of your company; every amusement, every delight that can gratify the senses, shall be yours; and the best masters that any kingdom can produce.”

“ I am infinitely obliged to you, my lord; but whilst the Earl and Countess of B * * will admit me to remain here, no temptations can draw me from them.—I have no inclination to shine, no wish to acquire more accomplishments than such as I may learn here;—and for amusements that I have never seen, they excite no desires in me.”

“ I thank you, my dear Elinor, for this kind preference; we will make up in friendship our deficiencies to procure you pleasure; and a time may come when I may have the happiness of introducing you to Lady P * * * myself.”

This the countess said: the earl added, “ Your lordship cannot know, I believe, that this young lady is entirely independent of us, and of the world;—the late countess has left her in money and valuables little
less

less than eight thousand pounds; a sum, though moderate, yet quite sufficient to procure her every elegance or satisfaction that she can wish for."

"Indeed! Eight thousand pounds!" returned the baron, "a handsome legacy indeed: I beg pardon for my volunteer offers of service; but you may be assured they were perfectly disinterested."—"I am not *quite* so *well assured of that*," thought Lady B * * ;—the subject dropped: the baron grew thoughtful for the remainder of the evening; and the party separated at an early hour.

Elinor, when alone, run over the events of the day:—the attention of the baron gave her no pleasure; his air and figure impressed her with awe, with terror rather than respect; and, though she had now and then thought, from a transient glance, that he must have been very handsome; yet his affectation of juvenile manners destroyed the effect which might have been produced by a contrary behaviour.

She was sensible that the earl and countesses watched every turn of her countenance,
when

when he addressed her, with an air of concern and anxiety, which she accounted for from his known dissipated principles ; and already she wished him fifty miles off, rather than have him there to interrupt the serenity of their lives.

Very opposite sentiments occupied the mind of Baron P * * *, though the conclusion of their ideas was very similar. He felt himself warmly and unaccountably attracted by the beauty and *naïveté* of this young recluse : he was sorry that he could not hide the sudden impression ; and not a little mortified to find that her old-fashioned obsolete notions were likely to prove a great obstacle, if not an absolute barrier to his wishes and schemes for getting her to London ; and without that could be accomplished, there would be no hopes of success.

He reflected upon her relationship to Masham : he knew that he had no brother ; a sister he had ; but then, if she married, this girl's name could not be Masham, if a child of hers. He formed a thousand vague conjectures concerning her, some of which

which puzzled him greatly ; but unable to draw any decisive conclusions, he contented himself with knowing that she was beautiful, and that he was already desperately in love with her, if a passion like his could deserve the prostituted name of love.

Restless in his sleep, he arose at an early hour and repaired to the garden, where almost the first object he saw was Elinor : he hastily advanced to overtake her.— Struck with surprise and concern, she would have avoided him ; but it was impossible ; and she was compelled to hear a vast profusion of compliments, such as she was perfectly unaccustomed to, and much of their extravagance were beyond her comprehension.

But when, on the conclusion, he caught her hand, and kissed it a *little too* passionately, all the heroic indignation of her favourite delicate heroines, at such bold and improper freedoms, added to the innate modesty of her pure mind, rose in full force to her cheeks, mantling with blushes, anger, and disdain.

“ I pray

“ I pray you, my lord,” said she, with an air of haughtiness that struck the baron dumb for some minutes ; “ I pray you, my lord, to respect yourself and me ; liberties of this kind are unbecoming to both ; nor is it proper to intrude upon a young woman thus privately, when she wishes to be alone ; I must therefore entreat your absence.”

The first emotion in the baron was surprise, the next vexation ; but the last was risibility, when she turned from him with the air of a princess.—When he recovered his voice he could not help laughing.—

“ Why, my dear little prudish heroine, where the devil have you picked up such sublime ideas, that to touch your hand, or the hem of your garment, is sacrilege ! Upon my soul, one would think you the empress of the East by your stately air !—Wonderfully educated indeed ! But I pray you, my dear Miss Masham, to descend a little if you please ; and be assured I did not intend to “ *intrude* ” upon you ; neither is kissing a lady’s hand such a dreadful

ful breach of decorum, as to deserve all this pretty anger and scorn."

This speech was uttered whilst he pursued her close, walking by her side.—Vexed and mortified by the ridicule of his words and manner, and by finding he still persisted in following her, she turned short round, burst into tears, and run with all her strength towards the house.

The baron, not knowing the unfavourable light in which he appeared to her by the cautious prudence of Lady B * *, was really thunderstruck at her behaviour; and having been but too often and too generally a favourite with the fair, he was inconceivably hurt that a young girl, who ought to have been proud and gratified by his notice, should repulse him with the air of a duchess, and then fall into tears, as if he had grossly insulted her; whereas he conceived he was doing her the highest honour.

Puzzled and confounded, he followed her to the house, and in the lobby met the countess. Perfectly master of himself,
he

he instantly assumed a gay air, saying, "I have had a little romantic interview with your young friend this morning:—upon honour, madam, she has been taught strange notions; but I hope your ladyship will give the sweet girl a little knowledge of the world, that she may descend from her altitudes."

"I do not understand you," said the countess, giving him her hand, as he tendered his to lead her into the room; "Elinor is indeed unacquainted with the customs of the fashionable world, yet she has such natural politeness as might put artificial manners to the blush; but I wish to know what are her deficiencies in your lordship's opinion?"

In the most ludicrous style he represented what had passed between them; and glossing over the *warmth* of his address, and heightening the grandeur of *her* air, and the dignity of *her* words, he placed both in such a burlesque and ridiculous point of view, that even the countess could not refrain a smile at the expence of her favourite. She, however, defended her warmly,

warmly, praising the delicate simplicity of her manners in unison with the virtues of her mind.

“To courtiers,” said she, “and those whom fashion and custom, or, as you are pleased to call it, the polish of the world, render the ingenuous feelings of a spotless heart quite incomprehensible, doubtless my young friend must appear strangely tenacious and romantically reserved; but Nature speaks in *her*, and its sacred dictates should always be revered, though they may not accord with fashionable manners.”

“A truce, dear Lady B * *,” cried the baron laughing; “I little expected a travelled lady, a resident in the delightful regions of love and gallantry, would return to England in love with homespun prudishness, or the bashful dignity of a country girl, who no doubt has been taught to think herself the princess of a castle.”

“And *I*, my lord,” returned she greatly provoked, “I as little could have expected such illiberal sarcasms on an amiable young woman, whom but yesterday you seemed so passionately to admire. It must lead me

to conclude that the interview you talk of has been pretty extraordinary, to occasion so great an alteration in your sentiments."

"By no means an alteration," returned he, a little abashed, by the eye-beam that seemed to penetrate through to his heart; "I think her a most charming girl; but she really is romantic, from being immured all her life in the country; and I could not help giving way a little to pleasantry, on the strangeness of her ideas: but, in serious truth, my dear lady, I am little less partial to her than yourself."

The breakfast bell put an end to the conversation, by bringing the earl and Elinor into the room: the latter advanced, and paid her morning devoirs to her dear Lady B * *, with the spontaneous affection of a grateful heart, so legible in her countenance, that the countess embraced her with a more than common warmth.—

"Good day to my dearest Miss Masham; may Heaven ratify every wish of her heart!"

"To which I say Amen," said the earl: "and now, ladies, to breakfast, if you please, for I have been wandering about
the

the grounds till I am quite hungry." The countess resumed the cheerful air, natural to her: Elinor had brushed off her tears; and recovering her spirits when so affectionately treated by her friends, the vexation in her mind subsided, and she behaved to the baron with a modest dignity, without any appearance of resentment, that at once mortified him, and gave him a high idea of her prudence.

The breakfast was scarcely over, when young Mr. Douglas made his entrance, and was introduced to the baron; who in a short time read in the expressive eyes of the young gentleman his warm admiration of Elinor: indeed it was very visible to every one but her; who, unconscious of her charms, and a stranger to vanity, saw only an attentive politeness, which gratified without exciting any particular emotion.

Mr. Douglas said, "his father was confined to his room in a very severe fit of the gout, which, by attacking him in the stomach the preceding day, had greatly alarmed them; but happily it had been drawn down to his feet, otherwise he would
certainly

certainly have paid his respects to the baron."

He stayed some time with them; and after taking leave to return, the earl attending him from the room, the young man, unable to suppress his feelings, said, "What an angelic girl is Miss Masham! I never yet beheld her equal."—"Why, indeed," returned the earl, "she is a dangerous, fascinating object to a susceptible heart; but I should suppose yours is invulnerable, if you have brought it safe home from your travels in countries where beauty is in its highest perfection."

"That is an assertion I do not allow of," answered Mr. Douglas; "the beauty of foreign countries never had the power for one moment to mislead my senses, though it dazzled my eyes: I am too great an admirer of nature not to give the preference to my own countrywomen, and of all women I have ever seen, to your lovely guest."

"Indeed!" cried the earl; "take care, my young friend, or your eyes may at last step beyond the bounds of prudence, if you do

do not check them in time."—"The caution is too late," replied Mr. Douglas, "to restrain my eyes, or guard my heart; nor can I think prudence outraged by a passionate admiration for an object so truly deserving: but no more at present," added he, smiling; "you are in possession of my secret, my lord; let it rest with you till some future period, when I am enabled to speak more openly."

He took leave; and Lord B * * returned to the family not a little surprised at the frank avowal which young Douglas had made of his passion, and which he was well assured would meet with every opposition from his family, whose pride of ancestry never would countenance an alliance with one untitled, or unallied to nobility.

The ladies having retired to pursue their morning avocations, the gentlemen rode out, and returned only just in time for dinner. At the dessert the baron requested Elinor to hand him a few walnuts: in returning the plate her ring caught his eye.

"You have a very elegant ring, Miss Masham; will you indulge me with a nearer

nearer view of it?"—She started, and felt a universal tremor: it was the first time it had been noticed. With a trembling hand she gave it, heedfully examining his countenance whilst he looked at it; but his features expressed nothing: he viewed it with the approbation of a connoisseur in diamonds, and returned it, saying, "'tis most truly beautiful: a present, I presume?"—"A legacy, my lord," she replied, "bequeathed to me as a jewel of great importance."—"It is, indeed, very valuable," said he, "and of course very dear to you."—"Inexpressibly dear," she returned, tears trembling in her eyes.

He seemed surprised at her emotion, and waved any further remarks, by suddenly changing the conversation to young Douglas.

Letters from the post-town were brought in; and, to the extreme vexation of the baron, he received one commanding his immediate attendance at court, on business of high import; and another from his son, excusing his non-attendance on him at B * * Castle, as he was just setting off

with a party for France, to pass a few weeks at Paris.

The first letter really disconcerted him; but he was too well accustomed to the capricious flights of his son, to be much vexed at the latter, otherwise than as he knew the expence would fall heavy upon him; Mr. Tudor being generally beyond all bounds in his extravagant demands upon his purse.

“ My amiable friends,” said the baron, “ I cannot speak my mortification at the order I have received; 'tis the curse of greatness to have no will of one's own; and a king's favourite (looking consequential) is often the slave of caprice; though possibly some affair of importance calls for my judgment. Be it as it may, I am doomed to sorrow and regret, that after so long a journey, and feeling myself so entirely happy, I am obliged to give up the pleasures of the heart, for the fatiguing business of the head.”

The earl and countess expressed their concern at this unseasonable interruption to *their* happiness.—“ If you are sincere,”
said

said he, abruptly, " what hinders you from accompanying me to London? I promise you it is the only thing that can divert my chagrin.—Lady P * * * will rejoice to see you, and I shall have the pleasure of presenting my friend to the king."

The earl politely thanked him, but declined the invitation for the present.—" I shall endeavour to be at court previous to the birth-day," said he; " but I have much to do here now; the estates have been so much neglected, that it requires the eye of a master to see them restored to their former fertility and value."

The baron then urged Lady B * * and Elinor to go with him, leaving the earl to follow at his leisure.—Her ladyship told him, " she was an unfashionable wife, and had been so long accustomed to the indulgence of her husband's company, that she could not forego it for any other promised satisfaction;—and for Miss Mafham—"

" Ah! madam," cried Elinor, seizing her hand, " that highly honoured girl has no wish but to attach herself to you and

the earl, her dearest and most revered friends : this castle, while you are in it, is the boundary of her desires."

" Well, ladies," said the baron, rather spitefully, " I can only say that I am very unfortunate to be torn from you in such a sudden manner, though it is pretty evident that the regret is all on my side, or I should not find you so cruel and hostile to my wishes."

" That is an unfair conclusion, my lord," replied the countess, " when the earl has told you, that he has duties which demand his residence here for some time ; and when you must know, that it is *my duty* to attend on him."

" Not I, truly," answered he ; " that the wife should attend the motions of a husband, is quite an antediluvian idea, that has no existence in the fashionable world ; and for a lady who has had the French and Italian ladies for patterns, I should least of all have supposed that the Countess of B * * would have adopted such ridiculous and obsolete notions."

" I am

"I am of an unfashionable age," answered she, smiling; "when a woman is turned of forty she may be allowed to act like a disciple of the old school, when husbands and wives were domestic, and attached to each other."

"Not a word more," cried he, "if you value your reputation.—Turned of forty! why, my dear madam, 'tis youth, absolute youth;—what a solecism in good-breeding, to suppose a woman at forty a disciple of the old school! You must enlarge your ideas, my dear madam, when you emerge from your solitude, and become a member of our society. Virtue, though a rich jewel, requires the polisher's hand to make it attractive; and you must first condescend to think and act like the present race, before you will make converts to old times."

"I shall never presume," answered she, "to set up myself as a pattern for imitation; I am too conscious of my deficiencies and few claims to attention, in circles of fashion and polished manners; but I may venture to hope, that as I shall make

no pretensions, I may be quietly allowed to follow my own inclinations, when they do not intrude upon the opinions of others."

"You must ever be charming and respectable," returned he, "whether grave or gay; 'tis a selfish principle that induces me to wish you would conform to the customs of the present day, that the world may not be deprived of one of its greatest ornaments."

"Very well concluded," said the earl, laughing; "and I dare say Lady B • • is not so abstracted as to be insensible to your compliment. I am really much concerned that this flying visit is so speedily terminated; so long a journey, and so short a stay, is a great tax upon your friendship, from inconvenience and fatigue."

"I depend upon seeing you soon in London," returned the baron; "you have no other way to console me: but will you pardon me if I once more take the liberty to hint, that it would be much for the advantage of Miss Masham, previous to her entry in the great world, to have her natural graces improved by the hands of masters:

masters: the polish of fashionable accomplishments is an absolute requisite for an introduction to society."

"I believe so," answered the countess; there are but few who know how to appreciate the beauties of Nature—an unadulterated heart, or the unaffected goodness of a virtuous mind: but masters, such as you speak of, are not easily to be met with; however, as you observed just now, my lord, the intrinsic value of a diamond is never justly estimated, till polished by the hand of a master; and the graces and talents of Miss Masham cannot be thoroughly known till called into action: I shall therefore be as solicitous as your lordship on this head, for the advantage of my young friend."

Indeed the countess had more than once thought on this very subject: but, alas! masters for fashionable accomplishments did not spring up in every town, and even country villages, as in these more polished times.

"Grown gentlemen and ladies" were not taught to dance in Scotland; "draw-

ing, in all its branches," could not be "learnt in a week;" nor a "dozen tunes upon the harpsichord or piano, acquired from a month's lessons." It was only in the capital, or large cities, where professional gentlemen had pupils; the mania for accomplishments had not spread itself among all ranks of people, from the duchess, to the tallow-chandler and shoemaker's *young ladies*.

The countess, therefore, knew such important personages were not to be had nearer than Edinburgh.

Elinor felt but little gratitude to Lord P * * * for his solicitude; on the contrary, she was rather displeased that he should take the liberty to urge the subject so often, upon so slight an acquaintance; replying, therefore, to the last words of the countess,—“I wish not,” said she, “for any other advantages than such as I can acquire from your ladyship: I am not formed for the great world, and have no desire to shine in it.”

She spoke in a tone so unusually pettish, that her friends were surprised at it; but they

they let it pass, and changed the subject. The baron was to leave them the following morning, and they endeavoured to amuse him for the evening. Elinor, at Lady B * * 's request, (nothing less would have made her comply,) sung two songs, and presented him with a watch-paper she had very ingeniously cut out in a small landscape. It was with reluctance she gave it to him; but she could not deny the wish of her more than mother.

The baron was delighted with the elegant trifle, and never less inclined to leave any company than the present; but the orders he had received admitted of no delay; and intending to set off very early, he took leave of them that evening.—Pressing and kissing the hand of Elinor with much emotion, after many compliments, regrets, and wishes, he lowered his voice, and with a look that pierced to her heart, he bid her “be careful of young Douglas, for he could not *marry her*.”—The solemnity of his manner startled her: he had quitted her immediately, and was talking to the earl, as he bowed for the last time,

and retired to his apartment, followed by his lordship.

The countess, observing the agitation of Elinor, and the whisper of the baron, was hesitating whether she should ask the cause, when her young friend recovering, said, "she could not understand what the baron alluded to by his caution;" repeating his words to Lady B * *. She was not less surprised than Elinor, for not having much noticed the particular attentions of Mr. Douglas, she thought it very singular in the baron to mention his name; and could account for it only by supposing that he had conceived a very unwarrantable passion for Elinor, and was prompted by a groundless jealousy to warn her against Mr. Douglas merely because he was young and attractive.

Not willing to hazard any conjectures which might dwell in the mind of an artless girl, she only observed, that the baron had many strange fancies and uncommon ideas that no one could comprehend, and indeed were not worth investigating; that the young man he mentioned appeared

very amiable, and she heard was designed to marry a relation, the daughter of Lord Morton.

Elinor, perfectly indifferent to what concerned Mr. Douglas, heard the destination of his hand without feeling the least interest in its disposal; and at that time was only sensible to the pleasure of being freed from the troublesome attentions of the baron. Nor, indeed, did the countess feel any regret; for she had noticed those attentions with some anxiety from knowing his dangerous character, and fearing that the innocent Elinor, a stranger to the world and its delusions, might be drawn in to give them more credit than they deserved.

Whatever gratitude she thought due to the baron for the important services he had rendered them, her strong affection for an amiable orphan, whose peculiar situation claimed the regards of every generous mind, occasioned her rather to rejoice than to lament the shortness of his visit, whilst under the influence of his present predilection in her favour.

That predilection certainly had very rapidly increased, and was much more powerful than the baron himself had an idea of, till he turned his back on the castle ; then Elinor, the lovely, unadorned, ingenuous child of Nature, haunted his imagination, and tortured his heart.

He cursed the order of his king, and the slavery that drew him to London, where he had already exhausted every source of pleasure, and was sick of artificial beauty, and the joyless amusements so often pursued, till satiety had rendered them wearisome and insipid.

His vitiated appetite sought gratification in variety, and the family at the castle were quite a new order of beings to such as he had been accustomed to behold ; no wonder, therefore, that he was half mad at being so suddenly called from them.

He was even surprised at the nature of his sentiments for Elinor ; there was more of tenderness and respect, mixed with desire, than he had ever felt for any woman but herself, and there seemed a reserve in the manner in which his friends spoke
of

of her family and circumstances that deeply engaged his curiosity, and led to a thousand perplexing conjectures that disturbed him, though he had no right to be particularly interested in her affairs.

But we will leave the baron pursuing his journey in obedience to a command he execrated, and return to the castle.

The same evening of that day which had agreeably delivered Elinor from the presence of Lord P * * *, the earl was informed that Sir William Douglas had died that morning of the gout in his stomach. He was a gentleman so respectable, so much beloved by all ranks of people in the neighbourhood, that he was very generally lamented. Lord and Lady B * *, though their acquaintance with him had but just commenced, felt real concern ; as the death of a good man is a general loss to the community, and an irreparable one to his family and connexions.

This event reminded the earl of what had passed between him and young Douglas (now Sir William) relative to Elinor, and he could not refrain from repeating it
to

to his lady. She was most agreeably surprised, but after a few moments reflection,

“ I have,” said she, “ a very good opinion of the young man, but I fear the native pride of the family will operate against his inclinations in her favour, when he comes to be acquainted with the circumstances attached to Elinor’s birth ; and however *we* might be inclined to let her pass as the daughter of Mr. Masham, the integrity of *her* heart will not suffer the least shadow of an imposition to dwell on her mind : this I learnt one evening when I was speaking to her on the subject of her birth.”

“ She is a charming young creature,” returned the earl, “ and the adventitious circumstance of birth can neither add to, nor take from, her real merit ; yet mankind are slaves to prejudices which, though their judgment may condemn, they have not the courage to resist ; and too often happiness is wrecked by the tide of public opinion, and the glare of appearances.

“ If young Douglas *should* have a sufficient quantity of love and spirit to rise superior

perior to family consequence, the pride of ancestry, the opposition of his relations, and the ridicule of his acquaintance ; I shall applaud his resolution and discernment, though I can have nothing ostensibly to do in the business."

Those sentiments of the earl we shall have occasion to recollect at some future period, when it will be observable, that the weakness of human nature is such, as to make a material difference between theory and practice ; and that we can tolerate actions in another that do not militate against *our own interest*, when every feeling of pride and indignation is roused to oppose the same proceedings, if they are inimical to our own favourite views.

Some further conversation passed between Lord and Lady B * * relative to Elinor ; but they agreed to observe a profound silence, and an exact neutrality, should Sir William Douglas pursue his inclination in favour of Elinor, as they had the most perfect reliance on her prudence, and were convinced of her confidence in their friendship.

This

This good girl had in the mean time received an extraordinary visit. She was told Mr. Malcolm wished to see her: she admitted him with pleasure; but how much of that pleasure abated when she beheld him pale, thin, and extremely feeble. She received him in the cedar parlour. On his entrance, he threw a melancholy look round the room, then at Elinor, again surveyed the parlour, sighed, and burst into tears, incapable of any answer to the kind words she uttered.

She was greatly affected, and taking his withered hand between hers—"Recover yourself, my old friend; sit down; I thank you for this kind remembrance of me." The words faltered on her tongue, for he still wept like a child.

When he could speak—"Heaven bless you, my dear young lady, you are the same kind soul that you ever was; but times are altered with me, I am very unhappy. Aye, my dear Miss Elinor, 'tis too true, for all you look so piteously on me; when I left this castle, all my comforts were left here too."

Again

Again he wept; and the recollection of former days, and the grief of this old and faithful servant, caused the tears of Elinor to stream also. This dumb sorrow was suddenly broken in upon by the abrupt entrance of Mrs. Malcolm. "So, good Lord! exactly as Bridget said, here he be a-puling and a-crying to Miss. I wonder you ben't ashamed, Dick Malcolm, to come here a-whining, and telling of your trumpery tales: what hath she to do with our affairs?"

"And pray, Mrs. Malcolm," asked Elinor, with a haughty air, "what brought you here?"

"Why, after this old fool," answered she, in a lower tone, "who don't know how to have himself like so be as a gentleman; and so acause Bridget and I wants to make him look like himself, or go away, not to disgrace us, now he's coming here to complain. 'Tis a shame for a gentleman, who is a gentleman now, and got a good income, to be such a poor, sorry scrub."

"My

“ My good Mr. Malcolm,” said Elinor, “ tell me if I can serve you ; be assured it will give me the highest pleasure to remove any trouble from you : speak freely, and depend upon my friendship.”

“ O !” cried the old man, sobbing, and drinking the falling tears as he spoke ; “ O, you are my good angel ! I have not deserved all this kindness ; my conscience tells me I have not, though I always loved you : ’tis in your power, sure enough, to make my last days happy.”

“ Is it !” she exclaimed with vivacity ; “ tell me the means to do it, and you will give me true joy indeed.” — “ Then,” said he, falling on his knees, which feebly supported his weak frame, and from whence she could not raise him, “ then, my dear, blessed young lady, procure for me leave to live and die in this castle ! I once ungratefully refused the lord’s kind offer ; now, on my knees, I entreat the same favour. Here my happiest days were spent ; money and liberty have made me miserable. Let me exert my worn-out body all I can to deserve that bread I now beg.

beg for, and which I am denied in my own family."

"Gracious God!" cried Elinor, "is it possible? Let me assist you, my worthy friend, to rise; and fear not but the earl and countess will gratefully acknowledge your confidence in their goodness by this return to the castle: to give them an opportunity to serve you, or any worthy man in distress, is doing a favour to them."

"Well, if ever I heard the like!" said Mrs. Malcolm, with her hands spread, and then smoothing down the plaits of her damask gown, which had been her lady's, and was the gift of Elinor; "if ever I heard or seed such a poor, mean scrub, who, having money enough to live like gentlefolks, wants to acome to be a poor sarvant again, and all for because Bridget and I won't let him wear his shoes in our best room, or smoke his nasty pipe out of the cellar. Well, if I don't send Bridget, and she'll give it to you finely for disgracing her and me who keeps gentlefolks."

"I de-

"I desire," said Elinor, sternly interrupting her, "that you will not send Bridget here: nor, unless you both come to behave with respect to this worthy man, that either you or your daughter enter this house. As a wife and child, he may see you when he pleases, but you shall never insult him; and it shall be my care that he has a good parlour to smoke his pipe in, and enjoy every other comfort of life as long as I live."

Old Malcolm was unable to support the rush of joy that pressed upon his heart; he uttered the word "Heaven," and fell lifeless on the floor. The affrighted Elinor screamed for assistance, while Mrs. Malcolm was opening his cravat, and liberally bestowing on him the epithets of "old fool," and "mean scrub."

He was soon restored, and a glass of cordial renovated both life and spirits.

"Ah, Martha!" said he, looking mournfully at his wife, "'tis a hard case that after living so many years pretty comfortably together, the goodness of Providence, and the bounty of our dear blessed lady, with

with the generous gifts of this kind-hearted young lady, put us in a way to live happy in our old age ; 'tis hard, I say, that these blessings have turned your head and heart to pride and to ingratitude—to forget God, your friends, and to despise your husband ; but I forgive you, and also Bridget : I pray God to forgive my unnatural child, and turn her heart, or poor Sandy will soon be as miserable as I have been. *Now* I look forward with content ; in peace I shall dedicate my short span of life in this beloved castle ; to implore the mercies of God on my poor soul, in blessings on my gracious benefactress, and in prayers for those who forget to pray for themselves.”

Quite exhausted, his head fell on his bosom, large drops rolled over his face, which he covered with his hands, while his feeble frame trembled with the painful emotions of his mind. Elinor wept, but the unfeeling wife replied—

“ Then, if so be you be determined, as I may say, to stay here, and leave us, why 'tis your own choosing, and you can't say 'twas Bridget or I ; for you knows Bridget
and

and I both said, we did'nt want to turn you to *live always* in the cellar, only when you smoked your nasty pipe; and to be sure, as Bridget and I said——”

“ Pray, Mrs. Malcolm,” said Elinor, “ leave your husband in peace; Bridget and you have already wronged him enough; in this house he shall be no more insulted by either; this is *his* asylum. But, poor, unhappy woman! where will *you* find *one* when *your* turn comes, as soon it will, to be turned from your house? I heard lately, with much concern, that you had both been prevailed upon to make over your annuity to Bridget and her husband. Your punishment will soon arrive; and that wicked woman will serve *you* as she and you have served this worthy man. Go, Mrs. Malcolm, go to your worthless daughter; repent in time, that you may have some one to pity *you*.”

“ Good lack-a-day!” cried she, “ you need not be so uppish, *go*, and *go*, indeed; why who be you? you can't tell that, I trow. I had fathers and mothers, aye, and grandfathers too; whereas, as I may say,

say, you springed from the parsley-bed, or dropt from the sky, for not a living soul knows where *you* comed from, or if you ever had a father or no, for all you be so proud, acause my lady left you a power of money: and to call my Bridget a wicked woman, who is a gentlewoman now, and lives upon her means, I'll make you prove them there words."

Elinor, who saw poor Malcolm almost sinking from his chair, rose, and taking his hand, "Come with me, my worthy friend," said she, "I will answer for it this is the last unpleasant day you will know; the faithful servant of our good countess will ever find a welcome here."

He accepted her proffered hand, and as he left the room, cried with a piteous look—"Ah! Martha, Martha! you will one day repent your offences against this dear lady, and driving your poor old husband from you, who, by your persuasions, put the staff out of his own hands."

They left her swelling with rage and spite, while Elinor conducted him into a little parlour formerly known as the steward's

ard's room, but which the present steward did not occupy, having had a larger apartment cleared and repaired for his use.

"Here," said the good-natured girl, "here, Mr. Malcolm, rest in peace; I may venture to say this room shall be yours, for I know the hearts of those who govern here. I will send you some refreshments, and let the countess know what I have done."

She left him to indulge the copious flow of grateful tears that spoke more than volumes, and flew to the apartment of Lady B * *: to her she related the foregoing scene, and had the delightful reward of entire approbation of her conduct, and a confirmation of all her promises and wishes in favour of old Malcolm.

The countess hastened to see him, and was very greatly affected by his grateful effusions, and no less shocked at the great alteration in his person; he was introduced to the steward and housekeeper as one in whose welfare their lady was greatly interested, and Elinor took upon herself the care of those little comforts and indulgencies

gencies that were gratifying to one of his age.

She learnt from him, that his wife and daughter permitted him to have no rest till he had made over the annuity to the latter, after which they grew so shamefully extravagant that he could not help remonstrating, which brought both upon him night and day.

After they had furnished a parlour very finely, they made him take off his shoes at the door when they *did* permit him to enter, which was but seldom; and they had a bench and stool put into the beer cellar for him to smoke his pipe in, as they would have no smoking within doors. He was flouted and huffed continually, and if they had a better thing than ordinary for dinner, he was not helped to it, because "old men had lost their tastes, and one thing was as good as another for him."

In short, wearied out by their constant ill-treatment, he threatened to complain of them at the castle; they then poured forth a volley of abuse against Elinor, till, no longer able to bear it, he snatched up his

hat and left the house, resolved to try that goodness they had so much and so ungratefully abused.

The foolish and ill-advised wife returned to her daughter inflamed with rage and resentment; and having no longer any expectations from Elinor's bounty, malice and envy were set to work to calumniate and traduce a character hitherto without a blemish.

They accused her of every contemptible vice, and wound up the climax by saying, "She was a poor, low bastard, found on a dunghill, reared by the charity of Mr. Mafham, who had cheated their lady to give her a fortune; and had also contrived the will himself, and thereby imposed upon this lord and lady to notice her; but that now she was so familiar with my lord that she would soon be turned out of doors, as all such low bastards ought to be."

This, with an infinity of vulgar stories, were circulated through the cottages and adjoining village; and at length, of such a penetrating stuff is scandal, they made their way to some of the servants in the castle,

castle, and from the lower orders, obtained the condescending ear of Mrs. H * *, her ladyship's woman, who being, in her own opinion, the handsomest, wittiest, and most fascinating creature in the world, had conceived a mortal antipathy to poor Elinor, because her lord and lady were so blind to think all perfection was centered in this simple, uninformed girl.

This delectable tale no sooner reached the ears of Mrs. H * *, than, with all the eagerness of malice, she found an opportunity to repeat the whole with every aggravation, and all the embellishments and additions so lively a fancy could create.

The countess was extremely shocked at the invidious tale, and repented it highly; she said Elinor was an orphan, the daughter of a gentleman, who dying, left her to the care of Mr. Masham; she reproved her woman for listening to or crediting such absurd legends; spoke of Elinor in terms of equal respect and affection, and charged her to make use of *her* authority

thority to contradict the story wherever she heard it.

But in vain did the generous lady try to silence the invidious reports; Mrs. H * *, far from obeying her mistress, gave the story the stamp of *her* credibility, and in a few days she paid a visit to the *lady* who attended on Miss Douglas, to whom she communicated every tittle of this delightful information.

The transition of it from her to the ear of her lady was a thing of course, and never was a tale of scandal more eagerly received or more willingly credited.

How opportunely did this charming story arrive, when, in the first days of mourning for her father, it turned the current of her ideas, and helped to dry up her flowing tears. She flew with the intelligence to her mother, and those ladies congratulated each other on their prescience and discernment, when at the first view they were disgusted with her vulgarity and ignorance, which Sir William had admired as modesty and wisdom.

While so many worthy persons were busy in promulgating a tale of scandal, the object of it, the amiable, unoffending Elinor, was engaged in taking lessons from her dear Lady B * * in several little elegant branches of education that lady had acquired from her long residence on the continent; and although, on several occasions, Mrs. H * * treated her with an impertinent familiarity, and the other servants also, when out of their lady's sight, were careless and disobliging, she had too much spirit to notice their behaviour openly, and too much good-nature to complain of them to the countess. She endeavoured to persuade herself the improprieties she could not but feel were the customs and manners of London servants; and though her natural good sense taught her to reprobate such manners, yet she submitted in silence to what she could not remedy.

Mr. Malcolm did all in his power at the steward's table to contradict the malicious stories Mrs. H * * so happily retailed; but his influence was small, 'twas

known he was protected by her, and therefore all the credit he gained, was "doing his duty to speak well of the bridge that safely supported him."

Near ten days had passed since the departure of the baron, during which time Lord and Lady B * * had paid a consolatory visit to Castle Douglas, from which Elinor had been excused at her own request, but which the good-natured ladies directly concluded was the act of their visitors, who began to see their error, and were ashamed to introduce such a horrid low creature among them.

No mention was made of her name, but by Sir William, who asked after her health with respect and feeling that drew a frown from his mother: *he only* seemed to mourn the loss of a respectable parent; the ladies made a parade of grief by their mourning habits, and sometimes by words of sorrow; but in the silent dejection, in the unaffected regret, exemplified more in manner than by language, might be traced in Sir William Douglas, real and heartfelt grief for the death of his worthy father.

Lady

Lady Douglas and her daughter had not failed to communicate to Sir William the ill-natured reports concerning Elinor, with every possible aggravation. His candid mind made liberal allowances for the misfortune attending her birth; it might be true that she was an illegitimate child, but that she was the offspring of mean and base persons he could not believe.

Peculiar circumstances might have, unguardedly, thrown her parents into situations as lamentable as indiscreet; but however blamable *their* conduct, it cast no reproach on her untainted mind. 'Tis true he was hurt, he was distressed that such prejudicial reports had been promulgated, and he would rather have married Elinor as the daughter of an honest peasant, than the abandoned child of a nobleman; yet his heart felt she was charming, and the only young woman he had ever seen with whom he thought there was a possible chance for happiness.

It was not a time at present that he could with propriety make the investigations he wished for, previous to the dis-

closure of his sentiments in her favour; and in the intermediate space he intended to be frequent in his visits, and minute in his observations on her disposition and character.

Sir William Douglas, with many virtues, was strongly impressed with an idea of family consequence, and there were times when pride and prudence struggled hard against the feelings of the heart. Good sense, divested of prejudice, was on the side of the latter; but many mortifying circumstances, adduced by the former against a marriage so degrading to the pride of ancestry, very often perplexed and confounded him: as to any objections from Elinor, he scarcely admitted a possibility.

One day, the twelfth from the departure of the baron, a small box was delivered at B * * Castle, directed for Elinor. Extremely surprised, she hastily examined its contents; which were, a letter to herself, and another to the countess, from Baron P * * *, with a parcel containing an elegant gold watch of the most fashionable make, chased with a set of figures, which,

which, on inspection, the countess said; "the device was Jephtha offering up his daughter;" and she immediately concluded within herself, that Lord P * * * had, during his short residence there, heard the stories that were promulgated about Elinor: she was vexed and hurt that he should ungenerously make any such allusion to her situation; but she was silent in her observations, that she might not distress her young friend.

The watch was suspended to a most superb chain, on which hung a locket of hair set in gold, and ornamented with large diamonds, engraven on the back with a coronet, and the letter P.—"This is all very strange," said Elinor: "I am sure I have no pretensions to a present of such value, nor ought I, I think, to accept of it."—"Read your letter, my dear girl," said the countess, "then we shall come to an explanation of the business."

In this letter he politely returned her thanks for the share she had in making the very short time he passed at B * * Castle one of the most agreeable periods

in his life ; he entreated her acceptance of the trifles he had presumed to send, as a mark of his friendship and esteem for her ; also of the regard he had entertained for her relation the late Mr. Masham, to whom, in his boyish years, he had many obligations.

He added, in a lively turn, “ That if those trinkets possessed the power of talismans, and seconded his good wishes, they would operate in procuring for her every blessing ; and as a charm to guard her from misfortunes, from the machinations of the wicked, and from the mischievous pranks of spirits and hobgoblins. If he might be allowed to ask any favour in return, it was, that whenever she should have a proposal of marriage made to her, she would let him know it ; as experience, and a long acquaintance with the world, might enable him to investigate characters, and prove of infinite service to her.”

Such were the contents of this letter, so strange and unexpected. The one to the countess was merely a compliment of thanks, and a joint and earnest request
from

from Lady P * * * and himself, "that the earl, the countess, and her young friend, would speedily favour them with a visit in London."

"Dear madam," cried Elinor, "instruct me what I ought to do: my mind revolts against accepting presents so considerable from a gentleman and a stranger; his request too is strange, is incomprehensible to me."

After some deliberation, Lord and Lady B * * gave it as their opinion, that there was no impropriety in her retaining the trinkets presented so openly under their auspices, as the immense fortune of the baron really made them trifling from him, though valuable in themselves; and to obviate all objections, the countess undertook to write, and make acknowledgments for his politeness to *her*, in his favour to her young friend, who gratefully accepted his present by *her advice*.

Elinor also enclosed a few lines of her own dictating; it was the second letter she had ever written, and she felt awkward in the task; but her friends were highly

pleased at the style so appropriate to her character and situation. Her expressions were pure and simple like herself, reserved, respectful, and grateful; without stiffness, free from affectation; and, in an idea that his kindness to her was intended as a compliment to her best friend and benefactress, she made no difficulty in assuring him, that if ever she received such an offer as he alluded to, that met *their* approbation, she should very readily solicit the judgment of *their friend* baron P * * *.

Those letters having been dispatched, and the earl engaged to dine with Mr. Johnstone's family, the ladies expected to have had a long afternoon to themselves for the improvement of Elinor; but they were scarcely seated with their drawing implements before them when Sir William Douglas and his sister were announced.

The latter, highly dressed in all the solemn pomp of woe, saluted the countess, gave a very slight movement of the head in return to Elinor's respectful courtesy, then throwing herself into a chair, "Dear Lady B * *," said she, "I am deputed by
Lady

Lady Douglas to make a thousand apologies to you for being unable to return your obliging consolatory visit; but besides being extremely low and indisposed, she is busily engaged in ordering preparations for our journey to England."

"To England!" repeated Lady B * *.
—"Yes, to Bath. The physician thinks it absolutely necessary in my mother's case; whose excessive grief must inevitably destroy her constitution, without a change of air, and new objects, happily produce more calmness and resignation."

The countess, who had noticed no symptoms of this "excessive grief," or any appearance of ill health, when she paid her compliments at Douglas Castle, with difficulty repressed a smile; not being one of those fashionable ladies who make a parade of feelings, without an atom of sensibility in their composition, or capable of assuming an appearance of illness, when their form and manners are a contradiction to their assertions.

Whether Sir William observed the incredulous smile, or was hurt by the falsehoods

hoods his sister so feebly run off, cannot be ascertained; but with an air of chagrin and displeasure he added—"Lady Douglas, madam, had an intention, or at least, a wish, to go to Bath before a late melancholy, and by me, much regretted, event took place: this inclination she has resumed, and makes a point that *I* shall accompany her and my sister to a place they cannot indeed properly appear at without a male chaperon."

"Indeed, brother, you oblige us with a very ill grace; I don't see why you should express any reluctance to comply with the request of a tender mother, whose sorrow and bad health——"

"Excuse me if I interrupt you, sister; it will always afford me pleasure to coincide with the wishes of my mother; nevertheless I must be allowed to say, that in going to England at this time I make no inconsiderable sacrifice both of inclination and interest."

"I wish, sir," replied she, with a haughty toss of her head, and a side glance full of meaning, "I wish you may never make

make a *worse* sacrifice of either." He made no reply, but addressed himself to Elinor; and taking up a small drawing of flowers—"What a beautiful selection for a bouquet! I dare say the taste of the flowers is your own; 'tis characteristic of the mind, at once elegant, simple, and attractive."

Elinor blushed and bowed; Miss Douglas looked, 'tis impossible to describe her looks; scorn, rage, and envy, twisted every feature into distortion, and sparkled from her indignant eye.—"Bless me!" said she, "now I think of it, I didn't expect to see *that lady here* after the strange stories that go about the neighbourhood of her—such *horrid, shocking reports*."

"Sister!" cried Sir William, his face all in a glow.—"Fie, Miss Douglas," said Lady B * *, and was rising from her chair to say something more, when Elinor turning to her, very collectedly asked—"Of *me*, madam, do you mean," 'horrid, shocking reports' of *me*? Be so good to say of what nature are those reports?"—"I blush for you, Miss Douglas," said her brother.—"Be composed,
my

my dear Miss Masham; listen not to a false, invidious tale."

"Composed!" repeated Elinor; "I know no cause, sir, for discomposure; but I must entreat, nay, I have a right to be informed, what Miss Douglas means by her pointed expressions to me."

"Before Miss Douglas answers you, my love, I beg that young lady to understand, that you are my adopted child; that my affection for you is grounded on your almost unequalled merits; that whoever affronts you, insults me; and that, as a friend and mother, I shall resent your injuries."

"Dearest Lady B * *!" cried the grateful girl, tears springing to her eyes, "how shall I ever deserve your goodness? But permit me to pursue my inquiries of this lady;—'Horrid, shocking reports,' she says, are against me. Good God! what then have I done; of what am I accused? Dear madam, speak out."

Sir William was walking the room in great agitation; Lady B * *'s countenance bespoke the emotions of her heart; Miss Douglas alone preserved an air of composed

composed intrepidity—"Well," said she, "if you oblige me to speak, the people say, 'you were a wretched, misbegotten child, pickt up by Mr. Masham, and supported by him, without ever knowing from what low, wicked folks you derived your being; and that, through your artful management, and his *mis*-management, you contrived to make the old, superannuated countess leave some hundreds to you, to preserve you from the beggary to which you were born."

Lady B * * was almost sinking from her chair with agony for her young friend. Sir William, at first, was flying in a rage to stop the ill-natured repeater of reports; but his eye meeting Elinor's, astonished at the calmness of her features, and the mildness of *her* eye, he stopt, drew back, and with breathless impatience, his whole soul devouring her countenance, he waited for her reply.

Elinor was indeed surpris'd, a momentary horror crept through her veins, but she instantly recovered. No absurd pride, no false shame, had any place in her heart; the

the circumstances of her birth were a source of sorrow, but not of reproach to her; she had been taught, neither to

“ ——— borrow merit from the dead,”

nor to attach shame to herself from the evil actions of others: she heard Miss Douglas without betraying confusion, or sinking under the mean accusations, as that young lady expected.

“ And is this all, madam,” said she, “ of the horrid reports? I frankly confess to you, though circumstances are exaggerated, they have their foundation in truth. I do *not* know the authors of my being, I never enjoyed the blessings of maternal care: I was cast off, given up in helpless infancy to the protecting arms of Mr. Masham, whose tender paternal love left me little to regret that I know not a father. But I was not “ picked up ” by him; I was *consigned* to his care under such solemn restrictions of secrecy as death itself could not dissolve.

“ Heaven alone knows whether my parents parted with me from necessity or choice;

choice ; whether they are unfortunate and respectable, or vicious and contemptible. I claim no merit from their virtues, if they possess any ; neither do I feel myself degraded by their vices whatever they may be.

“ I would give worlds, if I had them, to know my parents, and to find them such as I could love and honour : but Mr. Masham was my real parent, I owe more than life to him ; I am indebted for such lessons, such advantages, as will, I hope, ever entitle me to *my own* respect ; and if I deserve the favour of this lady, the poor, cast-off girl, will feel happy whatever is her lot.

“ The ‘ artful management’ I know nothing of. The countess loved me ; I endeavoured by duty and affection to deserve it. She had the generosity to provide for a deserted orphan by giving me some *thousands* instead of hundreds ; very unexpected and undesired by me ; for I knew not then the value of money, and believed myself the daughter of Mr. Masham.

“ Shame

“Shame on *them*,” said she, raising her voice, and her humid eyes sparkling with generous indignation; “shame on *them* who impute art or *mis*-management to one of the best of men; whose heart was free from guile or deceit; the kind, the worthy protector of an unfortunate orphan; the warm friend, the faithful steward, and the benefactor of the poor.”

Here she burst into a flood of tears, that drew drops of blood from the heart of Sir William, who flew to console the lovely mourner: the countess brushed off the falling tear, equally surprised and charmed at the courage and steadiness of her adopted child, in this long, yet simple account of herself.

The feat of Miss Douglas grew very uneasy, she felt her own littleness; but pride and envy rose in proportion against the object she had been so desirous of humiliating, but whose frank avowal of her situation deservedly lifted her into consequence.

Lady B * * observing the countenance of Miss Douglas, and not thinking it possible that she had spoken from a malignant heart,

heart, but from the propensity some people have of repeating what they hear, careless of the pain it may occasion to others; she supposed the emotions so visible proceeded from regret.

“My dear Elinor,” said the kind lady, “you have spoken like an oracle: no circumstances of birth can degrade a mind like yours; whoever were your parents, they might derive honour from your sentiments; and whatever might be their rank, they could add nothing to your intrinsic worth. I am persuaded Miss Douglas is inclined to do you the same justice that must strike every one who is so happy as to know you.”

“As I have not the *honour* or *happiness* of an acquaintance, my judgment must be suspended; for I am not very fond of pinning my faith on another person’s opinion; and ’tis sufficient for the *young lady* that she has found so able an advocate—may she always deserve it! I can have no interest in the business, since every thing that concerns her must be perfectly indifferent

to

to me; but you will find it difficult to stop people's tongues, I believe."

"The attempt *shall be made*, however," answered Sir William, with great indignation. "Neither the fame nor the peace of this lady is *indifferent to me*. I know how to appreciate merit that is superior to birth or fortune; and whoever presumes to throw the smallest blemish on her character, has an avowed enemy in me."

If Elinor was surprised, how much more provoked was Miss Douglas.—"Charming! I protest," said she, affecting a laugh of contempt; "why, brother, you are another Amadis de Gaul; but I believe you have nothing to fear from opponents, if you enter the lists as a champion for—*nobody knows who*."

"Miss Douglas!" cried the countess, rising with a look of high displeasure, "I consider this subject, pursued in such a manner, as an insult to myself."

Elinor caught her hand;—"Forgive me, madam, if I interrupt you, it would give me inexpressible pain should any difference

ference take place on my account. That lady has been prejudiced against me ; and where many circumstances give a colouring to the invidious reports she has heard, I have no right to arraign her opinions : all that is left for me, is to conduct myself in a manner that may stand the test of *your* judgment, and my own self-examination ; then I shall have no solicitude for the approbation of persons whose rank and fortune seems to give them a licence to insult less happier beings.

“ But,” added she, with a sigh, “ I know nothing of the world ; and perhaps what appears insult to me, may be naturally attached to my situation ; if so, or if I have spoken with too much asperity, Miss Douglas will pardon me.”

The countess had not resumed her seat, her visitant therefore rose also ;—“ You will have the goodness to excuse this short visit, Lady B * *,” said she, assuming all possible *non chalance* in her manner ; “ I have a thousand things to do, and my mother proposes to begin her journey in a couple of days.”

“ You

“ You will do me the favour to present my respects, and best wishes for the health of Lady Douglas,” said the countess, very gravely, “and I hope her ladyship and you, madam, will have an agreeable journey.” Sir William bowed on her hand;—“ I shall not take leave of you now, my dear madam ; on the contrary, I invite myself to partake of your breakfast to-morrow, if I have your permission.”

“ We shall feel honoured by your company,” answered she. He bowed with the highest respect to Elinor, more pointed than to the countess, who gladly saw Miss Douglas leave the room, her former opinion of that lady being totally eradicated by a behaviour so cruel and unprovoked.

“ My dear girl,” said she, embracing her young friend, “ it would be difficult to say how greatly I am charmed with your spirited and proper conduct to Miss Douglas ; I had no idea that you could have been capable of such exertions. Really you are an extraordinary girl, and rise in my estimation every hour.”

“ Then,”

“Then,” said Elinor, “I defy the power of fortune or malice to hurt me. I have been considering from whence these reports could originate, unknown as I am to the neighbourhood, and can only trace them to the malice of Bridget, who, by listening at the door, heard the contents of Mr. Masham’s letter, and who, displeased with the bounty of my generous benefactress, and recently hurt by the protection you have given to her father, has taken this method for revenge; and, I have no doubt, will promulgate a thousand stories to my disadvantage. Upon the whole, therefore, Miss Douglas was not blameable—that is, not so very blameable.”

“You are very good, my dear, to excuse her,” returned the countess; “but with me she has lost all her credit. There was a time when I looked forward to a union between her and our Edward; but a malignant heart, that could feel pleasure in wounding the bosom of an unassuming young woman, is too despicable in my eyes, be her rank and fortune what it may, ever to hold such a place in my esteem as I hope to give to

whoever shall be the wife of my beloved son."

Had this lady heedfully observed Elinor, she must have discovered her secret; but the moment the name of Edward was pronounced, she turned aside, and busied herself in collecting the drawing implements to renew her employment, and by so doing, hid the blushes and confusion she could not repress.

The countess made no remarks on the behaviour of Sir William, nor did Elinor, but she thought of it with various conjectures; and both ladies were so occupied by reflection that but little conversation took place till the earl returned to them, when he was made fully acquainted with the visit of Miss Douglas.

His sentiments it is unnecessary to repeat, since they coincided with his lady's, and were expressive of the warmest approbation of Elinor.

The following morning Sir William appeared at the breakfast table; a respect next to reverence appeared in his behaviour to our heroine, and admiration was
visible

visible in every look and word. When the repast was over, the gentlemen withdrew together; and after above two hours conversation, Sir William came in to make his compliments to the ladies, saying, in a hesitating voice, "that he should have the happiness of seeing them again in the evening."

He had no sooner left them, than the earl, without any circumlocution, told Elinor, "he was commissioned by Sir William Douglas to make her a tender of his hand, his heart being already in her possession;—that, master of himself, and perfectly independent of his mother and sister, it would be the study of his life to make her happy, if she would condescend to accept of him. Recent circumstances forbade an immediate union; but that, if he might hope he was not disagreeable to her, his stay at Bath would be short, and he should devote himself to obtain her regards."—"I believe," added the earl, "I have faithfully executed my commission; and permit me to felicitate you, my dear Miss Masham, on your worthy conquest."

When he stopt, the countess warmly embraced and congratulated her, while Elinor sat mute, insensible, the statue of surprise. But when the earl said, Sir William requested permission to see her in the evening on the subject, previous to his departure, she recovered from her astonishment, saying, "I cannot, indeed, my lord—I cannot see him on any such business. I am very greatly surprised, and doubtless much obliged, for his favourable opinion; but—"

"But, what, my dear Elinor?" said the countess; "you cannot, surely, have any thought of declining an offer I should think honourable for a child of my own. I hope you are not so romantic as to refine away your happiness by a false effort of generosity, or an overstrained delicacy."

"I know not," said Elinor, blushing and confused, "what name you will give to my refusal of Sir William; but I really have never once thought of marriage, nor of him, otherwise than as an amiable young man, to whose politeness I am obliged; but never can I think of being united to
him

him for life, if I *did* feel any preference for him, which I do not.

“ I know little of mankind ; he is almost the only young man I have seen ; what dependence, therefore, could I place on my own judgment, or what compliment should I pay to him, when I have no choice ? ”

“ You know not the nature of your feelings,” said the countess, “ till you hear him on the subject.” — “ Indeed, I *do*,” answered she, eagerly ; “ I know that I would not marry Sir William Douglas, that he is quite indifferent to me, and that I *would not* be the daughter, the sister, of Lady and Miss Douglas, for all the world. I am content in my situation, and if honoured with your protection, never will I leave it to be the wife of Sir William.”

Her friends were astonished ; they had thought it among the chapter of *impossibilities*, that a young woman, disengaged, and so peculiarly situated, should refuse an offer so unexceptionable, so every way advantageous, and so superior to any thing they could have hoped for her.

They reasoned the case with her, and adduced every argument which friendship could suggest consistent with delicacy : but in vain were all their endeavours to bend her inclinations ; Elinor, though enlightened and improved by the conversation and advice of Lady B * *, had yet a little tincture of her former favourite studies dwelling on her mind ; she thought it heroic to refuse an advantageous offer from points of delicacy and honour, and believed she should have done the same had she never beheld Lord L * * *, the amiable Edward, the first pleasing object that had ever met her eyes.

But alas ! poor Elinor knew but little of the human heart ; it was the image that she cherished at *her heart*, it was a latent hope she indulged, almost unknowing to herself, that she should again see the charming youth, whose form, whose voice, and fascinating manners had left such an indelible impression on her memory ; it was this talisman that raised an invincible barrier against the entrance of any other guest, and rendered her insensible to the merits of Sir William Douglas.

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'Tis possible that she might have felt some repugnance to enter into his family; but 'tis also very probable that the advice of her friends, the splendid offer, and the importunities of an amiable man might have conquered the scruples of delicacy, and the heroism of romance, had not an impenetrable shield, in the form of Lord L * * *, repulsed every attempt to subdue her heart.

The earl and countess were inexpressibly vexed at her resistance to their wishes and arguments, and astonished at a firmness in her manner that was uncommon, and, indeed, unaccountable; but they were obliged to give up the point, when they saw their earnestness could not prevail, and had at length produced an agony of tears.

She threw herself at the feet of Lady B * *, entreating her forgiveness if, for once, she presumed to resist her wishes: it was death to her to appear ungrateful or obstinate, but she could not, she never would marry Sir William Douglas, though she honoured his merits, and was proud of his favourable opinion.

The countess, much moved, raised and embraced her.—“ We have done, my sweet Elinor ; not another word on the subject shall be said ; do justice to our motives, which have only your happiness in view : but you are your own mistress, and have a right to judge for yourself.”

The affectionate girl was overcome by this kindness ; and to make her easy, my lord undertook the disagreeable task of conveying her sentiments to Sir William.

That gentleman had, much against his inclinations, been compelled to comply with the earnest solicitations of his mother and sister, to escort them to Bath ; but he resolved first on a visit to B * * Castle, to obtain of the earl particulars respecting the birth and situation of Elinor, and to act according as inclination and circumstances should authorise him, consistent with his own honour. He therefore attended his sister ; but 'tis impossible to say how much hurt he was at her rude attack upon poor Elinor, or how greatly charmed with *her* spirit, and artless account of her situation.

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When they left the castle, he very severely reprehended Miss Douglas, whose pride and envy were roused to the highest pitch; the mortification and contempt she had intended to inflict on another, seemed to be retorted on herself, and every malignant passion overflowed against the innocent object of her hatred.

Lady Douglas received from her an exaggerated account of the preceding conversation, and she took her son to task with a haughtiness he could ill brook, and an air of authority to which he felt no inclination to submit; but, resolved to avoid coming to any extremities, by avowing his partiality for Elinor, until he had consulted with the earl, he withdrew from their reproaches and remonstrances without giving any satisfactory reply.

The earl, surprised and pleased with the attachment he professed to that amiable girl, very freely informed him of every particular relative to her with which he was acquainted, leaving him to draw his own conclusions on the several circumstances, and form his own conjectures re-

specting her birth. He did ample justice to her merit, and declared she was deserving of any rank or elevated situation to which she might be raised.

Sir William, a very natural consequence to be expected from a lover, chose to place every incident related to him in the most advantageous point of view, and the ardent passion, which gave every perfection to the beloved object, surmounted all the prejudices of birth, all the fastidious objections of pride.

Thus, having conquered all the obstacles that had at first militated against his wishes, he never dreamt of encountering any from Elinor, but the bashful drawbacks of a delicate mind, natural in her situation on so slender an acquaintance; and, indeed, in these ideas he was encouraged by the earl, who never expected any resistance from his young friend.

Judge then, reader, what were the feelings of Sir William, when, with a hesitating voice, and real concern, the earl repeated the ill success of his commission, and frankly confessed that her resolution

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was immovable, and her objections to an interview with him so firm and decided, that he was compelled to relinquish entirely the flattering hope of seeing her happy with a man so generous and deserving.

For several moments the rejected lover was incapable of speaking—"Good God!" he cried at last, "to what cause can I assign a refusal so unexpected, so undeserved? What is there in my person or conduct that she dislikes? From her behaviour, so gentle, polite, and unaffected, I founded the warmest hopes that I was not disagreeable to her. But this peremptory rejection, this obstinate caprice, (I must call it such, in not permitting me a single interview,) is altogether so strange, so different from what I expected in her character, that it proves to me there is no such thing as female perfection, since this almost angelic girl is unjust, capricious, and insensible."

The earl never once attempted to interrupt him, he wisely gave way to the storm, and permitted the disappointed lover

to vent his vexation to the winds as he hastily traversed the garden; but when he saw him silent, dejected, and mortified, he said—"Permit me, Sir William, to suggest a mode of conduct that may yet prove successful.

"Elinor is yet a stranger to mankind, and I strongly suspect, that, knowing she is to accompany us to Edinburgh, where she will be introduced into the world, the rectitude of her mind, fearful lest she should meet with an object more pleasing, induces her to refuse you from a principle of honour and delicacy."

"Well!" cried he, impatiently, "what is the mode you talk of?"

"To meet us at Edinburgh, merely as an acquaintance who has relinquished all dearer hopes, and as such entitled to her esteem and politeness. She will then, among the multitude, naturally draw comparisons, and, I am much deceived if her discernment does not very soon distinguish the worth of Sir William Douglas; and in that case your gratification will be the more satisfactory, it will be the triumph of
reason,

reason, and you will obtain her heart from a conviction that you justly deserve it."

He paused a few moments.—"At present," said he, "I can promise nothing; I own I am mortified and unhappy, but I hope that a little reflection will restore me to myself. I shall to-morrow leave Scotland; and if, after a short residence at Bath, I should find my heart still refractory, and unalterably engaged, I will do myself the honour to write to you—time and circumstances must determine for me."

Then, requesting his best respects to the countess, he took leave, and returned to Castle Douglas with a wounded heart, and the pride of ancestry deeply hurt by a rejection from—"nobody knows who"—in the words of his sister.

Elinor, mean time, had retired to her dear study, dissatisfied with herself, because she saw that she had given pain to her best friends: but so repugnant to her heart was the idea of being united to any man at present, that, though she regretted the necessity that had drawn from her a contradiction to their wishes, she did not, for a moment,

moment, repent the decisive negative she had given to the hopes of Sir William Douglas.

There was one circumstance attending this application that gave a severe pang to her heart—the earnestness of her friends for her acceptance of the offer, proved that they had not the most distant idea of giving her to their son; “the adopted child” was considered only as the protégée of the family, not as a future daughter.

“Well!” said Elinor, in the pride of heroism, “then if I am not their daughter, if their affection is not strong enough to give me an indisputable and natural claim to it—never will I enter into another family, now that I know the poor Elinor has ‘horrid, shocking reports,’ spread to her disadvantage, and is degraded in the opinion of such proud families as have insulted her.”

She wept, and placed her tears to the account of her unfortunate situation, that had invited the affronts of the malicious Miss Douglas; nor could the generous application of the brother console her for the reflection
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that she was "nobody knows who." But however mortifying this idea to a mind conscious of innate worth, it was in reality the *heart* of poor Elinor that was most deeply wounded, from a certainty that the earl and countess did not love her well enough to wish her united to Lord L * * * ; from thence flowed her tears, and it was this painful conviction that threw an air of fixed dejection over her features when she descended to the parlour, that gave her amiable friends very serious concern.

They exerted themselves to amuse her, and talked of a variety of subjects ; among other things, the earl observed, " that it was strange neither Lord L * * * nor Monsieur Fernis had written to them for the last ten days ; he could no otherwise account for their silence than by supposing they were on their journey to Scotland."

As the countess was about to reply, she accidentally cast a look on Elinor, whose face and neck were dyed with blushes, and whose tremulous agitation excited her attention so much as to arrest her words on her tongue, while her penetrating eye seemed

seemed to pierce through the crimson effusion, and read the very heart that so undisguisably appeared in the "eloquent blood" that mounted to her cheeks.

The earl, surprised at her silence, followed the direction of her eye, and beheld the confused, trembling Elinor plaiting down the folds of her plaid jacket in a hurrying way, that denoted her thoughts were by no means directing her fingers.

A silence of some moments took place; the noble pair exchanged looks, and saw their ideas corresponded; a new light burst on the minds of both, equally painful and unwished-for; neither seemed inclined to speak, and Elinor, timidly raising her eyes, and beholding theirs fixed on her face, hastily cast them down with deeper blushes and increased agitation.

After a long pause, the earl said, "I intend writing to Baron P * * * to-morrow; he was telling me that Lord Mountjoy had thoughts of going to Italy with his son, and wished for another young nobleman to join their party. The baron was desirous that his son, Mr. Tudor, should

accompany them, but my lord had politely evaded the offer ; and the baron knew his son too well, either to be surpris'd at, or resent the refusal. Now, I have a great inclination to let Edward make the tour with them in his proper character, if they have not already left England—What say you, my love ?”

“ That I am sorry my inclinations run counter to yours ; I really cannot accede to your plan. He is now, I think, capable of doing us credit, and of making a figure in his own country. He must be introduced ; and possibly, among the beauties of the English court, from among his own countrywomen, he may select some fair one of rank and fortune with whom he may form a union agreeable to our wishes, and fix for life in the happiness of a domestic circle.”

“ I have no doubt,” replied the earl, rising, “ but whenever Edward is attached, he will consult his own rank and honour, the respect due to us, and to his ancestors ; but we will talk further of this by and by.”

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He withdrew; and the countess, taking a piece of point-work from her basket, displayed it before Elinor, asking her opinion of it, and making several observations in a careless manner, that gave her an opportunity of recovering a little from the disorder that had so painfully affected her.

But in spite of every effort made by each party to appear easy, familiar, and cheerful, a visible constraint pervaded among them, and every one was pleased to retire early, and hold "sacred converse" with their own thoughts.

"I believe," said Lord B * * to his lady, "'tis scarcely necessary to request the nature of your sentiments on the observations of this evening; they are congenial with my own. We have made an unpleasant discovery; for I do not suppose that, however greatly you are attached to Elinor, you would wish to see her the wife of your son. I am very sensible of her worth, and should have been happy had she accepted the uncommonly generous offer of Sir William Douglas; but to speak plainly,
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I confess that it would never meet my approbation to see her united to Edward."

"Would to God!" returned the countess, "we knew her real origin; she has so many virtues, such astonishing natural talents, so many charms both personal and mental, that did her birth correspond with her other claims, most gladly would I fold her to my bosom as the daughter of my choice."

"But I own to you, that I am not so far above the prejudices of the world as to wish a son like ours, such as the proudest and greatest families might boast of with heartfelt exultation, should degrade himself by marriage; or lessen his own consequence by exalting a woman whose excellencies would be lost in the obscurity of her birth among the indiscriminating part of mankind, and whose connexions might hereafter be discovered to be such as would throw eternal disgrace and reproach on our son and his family."

"You have spoken my sentiments exactly," said the earl; "I do all possible justice to the merits of this lovely girl; and

and had she really been the daughter of Masbam, 'tis possible I might have sacrificed my views for his aggrandisement to the prospect of domestic happiness : but, circumstanced as she is, involved in mystery, and most probably the offspring of guilt, and of a mean origin on one side at least—no, I never can encourage a thought of giving her to my son.”

“ Yet, after all,” returned the countess, “ we may be paining ourselves with chimeras of our own raising ; I have little doubt but the heart of this dear girl is attached to Edward, but possibly he may be perfectly indifferent to her.”

“ No,” said the earl, “ do not deceive yourself ; her artless blushes, and the emotions that betrayed the secret of *her* heart, at once revealed a mystery that has long perplexed me ; revived ideas, that for a few minutes floated on my mind, but which had faded away from a succession of different thoughts ; but this evening, they again burst upon my recollection, and convinced me the slight interview which took place in the park between those young people,

people, has left an indelible impression upon their hearts.

“ I can trace the melancholy, the impatience of Edward to have the mystery, concealed from him in the castle, elucidated ; his dejection, and the reluctance he expressed to leave it when I sent him to visit you, and which then appeared so extraordinary to me ; in short, I have now a clue to the whole, and am sure it originated from the interview I have mentioned.

“ You recollect how anxious he was to come down with us, and that depression of spirits which hung about him, and was so unaccountable when all circumstances were cleared up ; the elevation of his birth and fortune might naturally have been supposed to fill a youthful mind with ideas suitable to his situation, and the rank so unexpectedly his due.

“ Nothing of this self-gratulation was visible ; and he complied with our wishes and the request of his friends, with an avowed repugnance to us, and a forced politeness to them.”

“ Alas ! ”

“ Alas !” said the countess, “ if his heart is attached to Elinor, what is to be done ?”

—“ To avail ourselves of the opportunity mentioned by the baron, and persuade him to visit all our old friends in his new character for one year.”

“ But should he come here first ?” —

“ *That*, indeed, might greatly disconcert my scheme ; for having taken Elinor under your protection, ’tis impossible to part with her.”

“ Impossible, indeed !” answered she, warmly, “ for I love her most sincerely ; she has the sweetest disposition, and the most ingenuous heart in the world : and, however contrary to my views and wishes it is that any mutual affection should take place between her and Edward, I must do her the justice to say, that the qualities of her head and heart are deserving of the highest distinction.”

“ I grant every thing you say to be just,” answered he ; “ but in short, it is a duty incumbent on *our son* to redeem the lost consequence of his family by contracting a noble alliance, that may restore our
former

former dignity, and add splendour to his own claims : and your sentiments being, I presume, similar with my own on this head, we must endeavour to crush the growing inclination, and make some sacrifices of our own pleasure to keep them separate, until time and a thousand probable chances shall give a different bias to their affections."

Whilst this noble pair were planning their future schemes, poor Elinor was a prey to the most piercing inquietude : she was conscious that the secret of her heart was no longer hid from the observing eyes of the countess ; she was sensible that her emotions had betrayed her ; she reproached herself for entertaining sentiments that she blushed at ; and accused herself of ingratitude and duplicity in withholding her entire confidence from her best friend.

She started at the monster her candid mind portrayed, deceiving a mother ; a benefactress to an unfortunate orphan, to whose enlightened understanding, and perfect knowledge of the world, she was indebted for information and improvement
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that gave her consequence with herself, taught her to know the sum of her obligations, and the rules such favours as she received imposed upon her mind and heart.

An upright, ingenuous heart like Elinor's wanted nothing more than a conviction of what was right and wrong, to determine on performing her duty: that awe and fearful reverence, which had on a former occasion induced her to guard her secret from the countess, had greatly worn off; her respect was tempered by affection, and love superseded fear.

If she had done wrong, she would no longer persevere in doing so; and she was now superior to the *false shame* which withholds people often from an acknowledgment of their errors, and the poor pride of persisting in wrong measures, rather than confess themselves in fault.

She resolved, as an atonement for a reserve she now thought criminal, to make an unreserved confession. She took out the letter of Edward's, so carefully locked up; she read it over, bathed it with her tears,

tears, and, with a sigh, folding it up—"I shall read it no more, to-morrow it will be out of my possession. Amiable youth, forgive me, if, in doing what honour and gratitude demands from me to your mother, I am compelled to expose your too favourable sentiments of an unfortunate being whom nobody claims, and who is without any natural ties to give her consequence or protection!"

She threw herself on her knees, and fervently supplicated her Creator and heavenly Father to guide her in the paths to rectitude and honour, and direct every action of her life agreeable to the tenor of his will. Her mind grew more composed; but a retrospection of the past, and the uncertainty of her future prospects, crowded upon her ideas, and effectually precluded sleep.

She met her friends in the breakfast-parlour with a languid eye and a wan countenance that raised their love and compassion, whilst their own clouded looks denoted their hearts were far from being at ease.

When the repast was over, the earl withdrew to his library, and after several fruitless efforts to speak, Elinor remained silent, embarrassed, and trembling. The countess, who observed her emotions, kindly took her hand;—"My dear child, you are not well—speak—tell me what ails you?"

Penetrated to the soul by this goodness, Elinor burst into tears; and pressing the kind hand between both of hers—"O, madam!" said she, "I fear that I am about to forfeit your love and esteem; but, whatever may be the consequence to myself, I will no longer impose upon you by withholding circumstances you have a right to be acquainted with."

The countess was alarmed, yet extremely touched by the emotions of her young friend.—"Be composed, my dear girl, and speak with confidence; fear not the loss of my esteem, for, if it is possible that you have committed any errors, I am thoroughly persuaded they originate not from your heart, but from your inexperience, and confined knowledge of the world."

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The tears of Elinor flowed in greater abundance, but they were tears of gratitude; and after a few struggles, she began her story from her first interview with Lord L * * * in the park, and described her emotions and anxiety, the steps she had taken to satisfy her curiosity in the north tower, the discovery she made, the conversation she overheard, and the subsequent interview in the study; concluding with repeating the last conversation; and delivered up that letter, so dear, so highly valued, into the hands of the countess.

That lady had attended with breathless impatience, dreading, indeed, a termination of the story more fatal to her hopes; but when Elinor finished her artless confession, and she had read the letter, she began to revive, she embraced the trembling culprit.

“My dear Elinor,” said she, “I blame you not; the reserve you wore towards me on our first acquaintance was natural enough; it was the result of innocence and timidity; your confidence now proceeds from a virtuous and enlightened mind,

and does you the highest honour. So far from diminishing my love and esteem, it raises you in my opinion, as deserving of my warmest affection, my sincerest respect. Would to Heaven," added she, "that circumstances would allow me the power—"

The entrance of Lord B * * interrupted her; he was surprised at the scene before him; Elinor rose, and covering her face, hastened from the room, while the countess repeated every word she had said, and gave him the letter Lord L * * * had left in the study.

The earl was more disconcerted and vexed than surprised, though he did not expect to find matters had gone such lengths. And here we cannot avoid remarking, that this noble pair, who possessed a thousand virtues, with true sentiments of generosity and elevation of soul, whose warm affection for Elinor induced them to wish her to become Lady Douglas, and who had applauded Sir William for being superior to the narrow prejudices of the world in *his* choice of a wife—

Yet,

Yet, now that a similar situation came home to themselves, when the mutual happiness of two amiable people depended solely on their relinquishing visionary projects of grandeur, and splendid alliances, from which they could derive no advantages that might be put in competition with the sweet satisfaction of domestic happiness—these parents so affectionate, these friends so zealous in behalf of Elinor, could coolly deliberate on the means for separating them from each other, and giving lasting anguish to both.

So differently do people judge in cases that affect themselves, from the opinions they form on the conduct of others; and so selfish is human nature in the pursuit of our favourite views, in the gratification of our vanity and interest!

But, in the moment when they were deliberating on measures unworthy of *their* hearts to conceive, they received a blow that entirely swallowed up all other concerns.

It was a letter from Monsieur Fernis, who, with the extremest reluctance, was

obliged to inform them, Lord L * * * had abruptly quitted his friends, saying, that "business of consequence called him to London a short time," refusing to let Monsieur accompany him; but promised if on his arrival there he should find his affairs such as to preclude him from joining them in a tour through Wales, he would write for Monsieur Fernis to meet him in London.

Monsieur had waited upwards of a fortnight, no letter had arrived, and his anxiety could no longer support the suspense that filled him with the most torturing uneasiness; he had therefore taken leave of the party, and hastened to London. At the house of Messrs. Trumans he learnt that his lordship had received some money ten days preceding, but that they were as ignorant as himself of his present residence, though they believed him to be in town.

He had also called at Baron P * * * 's, and two other houses, but gaining no intelligence, he conceived it to be his duty to give his lordship this information whilst he prosecuted his search, and should be
most

most truly happy to receive for answer, "that his lordship was safe in Scotland with his family."

'Tis impossible to paint the distraction of these fond parents; they dreaded a thousand accidents had befallen him; and could in no shape account for his return to London; since it would have been more natural he should have gone to Wales, and from thence proceeded to Scotland, particularly if he retained his predilection for Elinor.

Various were their conjectures and apprehensions, but suspense was intolerable; they determined to set off instantly for London; and, after a short conversation, the countess retired to seek for Elinor, and relate to her the distracting intelligence they had received, and the immediate necessity that compelled them to leave her, they hoped for a short time only, at the castle.

Poor Elinor felt little less sorrow and anxiety than the afflicted mother; but she struggled to suppress her own feelings, and inspire hope and confidence in the bosom

of her friend. She readily allowed for the urgency of their departure ; and the house-keeper, who had succeeded Mrs. Malcolm, being a very sensible, well-behaved woman, born to a superior rank in society, but reduced by misfortunes to humbler hopes, she had no difficulty in declaring, that with Mrs. Long she could be very comfortable till their return, as much so as anxiety for the peace of her dear friends would permit.

In a very few hours the earl and countesses were on their road to England ; while Elinor, deprived of her loved friend and instructress, tormented by a hundred painful conjectures, and combating with the tender inclinations she was sensible she could no longer indulge with any possible hope—wandered from room to room, restless, unhappy, and overwhelmed by despair.

She passed another night without sleep, and rose early to walk in the garden, though the morning was bleak and cold—

“ When the mind’s at ease

“ The body’s delicate”—

But

But poor Elinor's was too much absorbed in grief to feel the piercing air, she indulged the gloomy apprehensions of her soul; and, being now free from restraint, she retraced every circumstance of her "ill-starred destiny," and a stranger to the many bitter calamities that in various shapes assault the children of misery; she concluded herself to be the most unfortunate young woman in the world, since neither her favourite books, nor the information she had derived from the countess, had, in any one instance, brought to her view a person so cruelly, so peculiarly situated as herself.

She had strolled from walk to walk without observing any one distinct object, for her eye was turned within herself, till her foot striking against a large pebble, the pain caused her suddenly to raise her head, and the first object that met her view was the north tower.

She had no sooner fixed her eyes on it, than she determined to take a survey of those, now, deserted apartments; there was luxury in the idea of sitting in the

same room, in the same chair, where she had beheld the amiable Edward. There was no crime, surely, in the indulgence; it could not militate against the resolutions she had formed; it was a self-gratification that interested no one, and from which no consequences could follow distressing to herself or others.

No sooner had this design given a new turn to her thoughts, than she went back to the house with an agitation bordering on vivacity. Mrs. Long was pleased to see her countenance less clouded than on the preceding evening; and having once mixed a great deal with the gay world, she spoke of the sudden disappearance of Lord L * * * as a youthful frolic, some juvenile pursuit, which ought not to alarm his parents for his safety, as she had no doubt but he would soon emerge again from concealment, or end their solicitude by a letter.

Elinor was cheered by this opinion from a woman of her experience; and asked her, why she had not declared as much to the countess.

“ I had

“ I had no right,” answered she, “ to obtrude my ideas on her ladyship, whose knowledge and experience must be superior to mine : though, perhaps, the tenderness of a parent, easily alarmed for the welfare of a darling son, might hide from her such obvious suppositions as would have tended to lessen her apprehensions, had time been given for reflection ; but the affair was too delicate for me to take the liberty of giving any opinion of my own.”

When breakfast was ended, Elinor repaired to the study, lifted up the tapestry, unlocked the door, and crossed the room to the narrow passage from whence a door opened into the, once, mysterious north tower.

To her great disappointment, she found it fastened, and had never once recollected to ask the earl about the key, nor did she know where he had placed it, after the morning when his lordship had taken the countess through the apartments to satisfy her curiosity.

She looked through the key-hole, from whence she had made her former discovery, and to her very great surprise, saw a book, a small box, and a black case, laying on the table, which she well remembered to have been entirely cleared on the day they had gone through the apartments together; consequently, there must have been an inhabitant there since.

She stopped a considerable time to listen, but all was silent; she once raised her arm to knock, but instant reflection told her that step might be attended with danger, as she was entirely out of the reach of any assistance. Unwilling to return, she traversed the narrow passage for some time, but not the most distant sound met her ear; and at length, wearied out, she resolved to go round, through the wood-house and granary, to the other side of the building.

She was not long in executing this resolution, but here again she met with fresh mortification; a door had been placed, by order of the earl, at the bottom of the broken staircase, and that door was fastened up. If she was vexed, she was yet
more

more astonished ; for this passage being stopped, how was it possible any one could get entrance into the apartments ? and that some person had been there, she was perfectly convinced.

Perplexed, lost in conjecture, she returned to the house, and made some inquiries relative to this new door, which she heard was really nailed up, and only placed there to hide the ruins.

She then proceeded to Mr. Malcolm's room, which she was accustomed to visit once a day, and cheer him with the kindest attentions. Of him she inquired if there were any entrance to the north tower but through the gallery and the broken staircase from the granary.

He knew of none, except a small trap-door in the park, which led down to a large, deep, and damp cellar, which door had not been opened ever since the late countess came to the castle.

This information was sufficient for Elinor ; she immediately concluded that through this door she had lost sight of Lord L * * *, when he so suddenly left her in
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the park ; and that through this way, whoever the person was that now had possession of the apartment, he must have entered it.

Having now some clue to the mystery, she determined to pass the afternoon in the study, and from time to time examine through the key-hole to satisfy her curiosity. Engaged by this new adventure, it diverted her inquietude, and she thought every moment an age till the dinner was over, that she might have some hours to herself unmolested.

It must be observed here, that from the time that the earl and countess had resided at the castle, Elinor had always been accustomed to pass her afternoons with the countess in receiving from her many instructive lessons in different accomplishments, or in working and reading by turns. She had even passed whole days, sometimes, without going to the study ; but now a thousand recollected circumstances, aided by this new incentive to curiosity, carried her there with more avidity than ever.

With

With light steps she hurried through the gallery, and quickly unlocked the door; judge, reader, of her astonishment to behold Lord L * * * hastily rising from the table, no less agitated than herself at being thus unexpectedly surprised.

A sort of suppressed scream escaped from her; but so strong were her emotions, so overpowering her feelings, that the sounds died on her tongue, and she had fallen to the ground had not his lordship flown to support her, at the same time exclaiming—
 “Forgive me, charming Miss Masham! lovely Elinor, condemn me not unheard!”

She was unable to reply; he led her to a seat; and shocked at the changes in her countenance, he began to execrate himself for having thus abruptly distressed her.

In a few moments she recovered.—“O, my lord!” she cried, “why are you here? what am I to think of this concealment?”
 —“Judge not unfavourably of me,” he replied: “an irresistible impulse guided my steps; motives pure, yet secret, in which are involved the happiness or misery of my future life.”

“No

“No motives whatever,” returned Elinor, with spirit, “can justify such measures as have wounded the peace of your tender, affectionate parents. You know not, perhaps, that they have left the castle, overwhelmed with grief, and taken a hasty journey to London, in search of a beloved son, who had thus causelessly afflicted them.”

“Spare your reproaches, look less severely on me, my dearest Miss Masham; your displeasure I cannot support. This morning I was informed that my dear parents had left the castle, and of the cause that had called them from hence; my concern is inexpressible, for I had hoped a letter from me would have superseded one from Monsieur Fernis. What is become of that letter I cannot divine, but the consequences of its not being received I shall ever deplore.”

“Still, my lord,” said Elinor, “your being here, concealed in *their house*, without appearing before them, has such an appearance of mystery as is totally inexplicable to me, and, I think, most unworthy

worthy of your *character*, and the affectionate duty owing to them."

Lord L * * * gazed at her in silence ; the additional graces of her person, the dignity of her air, and the energy of her voice, surprised and confounded him. The intellectual knowledge she had derived from the instructive conversation of Lady B * * diffused itself over every look and word ; he was abashed at her reproofs ; and blushed at the poor figure he made in her eyes.

His ardent gaze gave her some emotion ; but anxiety and displeasure suppressed the softer feelings of her bosom, and her solicitude for the peace of her dear countess, stifled the rising partiality of her heart in his favour.

Seeing that she impatiently waited for his reply, after some few efforts to overcome his agitation, he said,—“ Perhaps, madam, in the endeavour to exculpate myself from the intentional design of giving pain to my beloved father and mother, I shall have the additional misery of incurring your displeasure ; but whatever may
be

be the consequence, I will lay open to you my motives for this concealment with truth and sincerity.

“ Pardon me if I refer to the letter I presumed to write to you for the nature of my sentiments, and to account for the indelible passion that took possession of my heart from the first hour I had the happiness of seeing and hearing you: a passion that has, and must influence every future action in the course of my existence. It was my wish to deserve your approbation previous to any open application for your favour, after my first presumption.”

He stopped; Elinor was silent and confused, yet seemingly attentive; he resumed his explanation.

“ It was my father’s command that I should attend some friends in a tour through England; I obeyed with reluctance, my heart was in this castle. The warm and just praises my father lavished on the charming Miss Masham, delighted me, and I languished to accompany him into Scotland, where I should enjoy a free and friendly intercourse with my lovely in-
flaver:

flaver: but, never in the habits of disobeying his wishes, I complied with his requisition, requesting only a punctual and circumstantial account of every transaction in the castle.

“ My father obliged me by a scrupulous exactitude in relating every incident that happened; and the grant of my wishes, as it very commonly happens to mankind in general, proved a source of vexation and torment.

“ I heard of your numberless graces and improvements with equal pride and delight: but when I heard that Sir William Douglas had a design to make a tender of his hand and fortune to you; that Baron P * * * was arrived, and was eager in persuading my mother to take you to London; I was no longer master of myself; the perusal of that letter inspired me with a desire to quit my friends, to repair instantly to Scotland, and, by a secret interview with you, learn from your own lips whether I was to be the most miserable, or the happiest and most enviable of mankind.

“ I feel

“ I left a letter for Monsieur Fernis ; I wrote one to my father, which I ordered my servant to send forward, and his neglect has been productive of every vexatious circumstance to my dear parents.

“ I arrived here in disguise ; I heard Baron P * * * had been suddenly recalled to London, and that Sir William Douglas was dead. The last intelligence increased my apprehensions ; the son had acquired additional consequence, and was master of himself. My distraction sometimes impelled me to appear, and openly avow my passion ; and whilst I passed two or three days in the torture of suspense and irresolution, to my infinite joy and surprise I learnt that he had left the country with his mother and sister.

“ Relieved, in some degree, from my inquietude on his account, I resolved, if possible, to obtain one interview with you, and then, either to appear openly at the castle, as coming off a journey, or, if that interview terminated unfavourably to my wishes, instantly to quit the kingdom, and accompany my friends abroad.

“ Daily,

“Daily, since my residence in the north tower this second time, I have visited this study, but never saw any traces that you frequented it; once only I observed some papers on the table that were new to me, and guessed you had been there; but I understood you were seldom separated from my mother, and therefore this once favourite study was neglected. To this kind attention to her also, I owe the mortification of not once having seen your face in the ten days I have been here, though I have incessantly watched in disguise round the house and grounds.

“Yesterday I came to the resolution of writing to you under cover to old Malcolm, and to entreat the favour of seeing you here unknown to any one: that letter is now in my pocket, for the only person in whom I could confide for its delivery was taken ill of a putrid sore throat; and this morning, to my infinite sorrow, I heard of the fruitless journey my dear parents have undertaken, and the grief I have occasioned to them through the loss of that letter, which I intended as a pre-
vention

vention of any uneasiness, supposing Monsieur Fernis should have written to them.

“ This painful information has caused me the most distressing reflections ; I wished to relieve their inquietude, but to depart without seeing you was impossible. I was balancing in my mind, whether to wait on you personally, or to write by any messenger I could procure ; when it suddenly struck me, that possibly, being now mistress of your own time, you might visit this apartment.

“ Here therefore I came, and was seated writing to you almost every particular I have related, when your sudden appearance, without my having heard a single footstep, greatly surprised me, and the fright you received, gave me agitation very little inferior to your own.

“ Thus, dearest Miss Masham, I have accounted to you for the whole of my conduct. If I have been wrong and precipitate, forgive me, my destiny is in your hands ; and, from your candid and ingenuous mind, I wait the decision that must mark the colour of my future life.”

Elinor had listened with the most profound attention and a beating heart to this long elucidation of his sentiments and conduct. She was gratified by the first, but mortified and hurt that they had been productive of such measures as had given so much pain and anguish to her best friends; she considered for a few moments on the conduct she ought to observe; on what duty and gratitude demanded from her; what respect for her own character, and his future peace, obliged her to be, at once, candid and explicit.

Collecting as much fortitude as her agitated mind would admit of, and assuming a look and tone both firm and decisive, she repeated to him the offer of Sir William Douglas, and her refusal; the sentiments she had heard his noble parents express relative to *their* views and wishes for *his* future brilliant establishment; and lastly, the confidence she had placed in the countsess, the delivery of his letter to his mother, and her fixed resolution never to encourage his addresses, since they could not hope to
have

have the sanction of his parents, and were inimical to their future designs.

Lord L * * * heard her with the utmost impatience, and when she concluded, he besought her to have some consideration for his peace, and not, from a romantic generosity, sacrifice the happiness of his life to visionary prospects that never would be realized; for he must take the liberty to assure her, that if *her* hand was denied to his wishes, *his* should never be given to any other woman. But he had too much confidence in the affection of his parents to believe they would doom him to misery, particularly when the object of his adoration was almost equally dear to themselves; when they knew they could not prevent him from marrying, though they might withhold their consent. He was assured, therefore, though the absurd views of pride and ambition might, for a short time, step between him and his wishes, yet, that they would soon be reconciled to an event they could not prevent.

“ Do

“Do not then, charming Elinor,” said he, “doom me to despair from considerations that are really of no consequence: permit me only the delicious hope that I am not disagreeable to you; let me flatter myself that my warm affection, my perfect adoration, and the endeavours of my life to deserve your preferable esteem, may be crowned with success; and I am well assured, the few clouds that may at first hover over us will be driven far away by the feelings of parental tenderness.”

“Never,” said Elinor, firmly; “never shall any such clouds hang over my head; never will I, for one moment, give pain to my more than mother—the parent of my mind, to whom I owe every sentiment that teaches me my duty to her and myself. As the son of those revered parents I esteem and respect you; I am grateful for your favourable opinion.”

“But, my lord, if you really wish my happiness, if you would not make me hateful in my own eyes, and destroy that love and confidence that subsists between your dear mother and myself—fly instantly

to London, relieve their anxiety, comply with their wishes, establish *their* happiness, let them glory in their son, and let their affection for me be the voluntary gift of their heart from a conviction that I deserve it."

"Good Heaven!" cried he, "and am I to be sacrificed at the shrine of romantic ideas of generosity? have I unhappily become the object of your aversion, my love rejected, my happiness of no consequence in your estimation?"

"Ah, Miss Masham! you overwhelm me with despair; you pronounce my doom without even a shew of reluctance; I am deplorably convinced that I have indeed no interest in your heart; your love for the parent extends not to the son, and every flattering hope is extinguished for ever!"

He pronounced the last words in a voice so touching, that poor Elinor's heart spoke but too feelingly its interest in his sorrows. With difficulty she suppressed her tears, and the trembling of her whole frame evinced the agitations of her mind; yet, reason, gratitude, and that proper
pride

pride which forbid a wish of forcing herself upon any family that had other views for their son, and were not desirous of an alliance with her, all together supported her in the conflict between duty and affection; and having once explained her sentiments, she determined to persevere in the line of conduct that became her character.

Her voice however was tremulous, and her eyes beamed softness and compassion, whilst her words were the firm dictates of reason, and the result of mature deliberation.

She assured him of her respect and gratitude; but whatever were the sentiments of her heart in his favour before now, at present he could obtain her esteem by no other means than instantly to follow his parents, and promote their views, their happiness, by giving up an attachment they could not approve of consistent with their own dignity; "for know," said she, "I have no name, no family—"

"I know it all," cried he, quickly interrupting her; "I received every information from my mother, whose just

praises of your fortitude, your true dignity of mind and sentiments, that would do honour to any rank—every circumstance, every line she wrote has confirmed your empire in my heart; and could I elevate you to a throne, I should still hold myself honoured by your acceptance, and myself the obliged person.”

What now became of Elinor's firmness? she could no longer support the struggle; she burst into a flood of tears, and covered her face with her handkerchief.

He threw herself at her feet;—“ Ah, Elinor! dear Elinor, forgive me! What am I to think of these tears?” She held out her hand to raise him; he kissed it respectfully, and resumed his seat; both were silent, till she had power to speak.

“ Think me not ungrateful,” said she, mournfully; “ this much-obliged heart feels, in its utmost extent, the generosity of your sentiments; but no considerations on earth shall influence me to act contrary to my duty, and those obligations imposed on me by the unequalled kindness of Lady B * * ; they will ever supersede all selfish views,

views, all secret impulses of the heart that militate against her wishes.

“ She found me a poor, uninformed girl, ignorant of men and manners; I had only learnt my duty to the Author of my being, the moral obligations to virtue, and a rectitude of conduct that must ensure my future happiness in another world.

“ Lady B * * has taught me to know the world in theory: an expansion of mind to be sensible of the duties I owe to society, though, possibly, I may never become a member of it; and has convinced me, *that mind* can never feel internal peace that permits the passions to triumph over reason, and violate its first duties. Such, sir, are the precepts your beloved mother has sought to inculcate in my heart, without any views, I am well convinced, but for my benefit; and I will prove a deserving scholar to my dear tutoresses, now that I am called to the trial; and to merit and obtain *her* approbation, shall console me for every sacrifice I make of inclination or interest.”

“ Pardon me,” cried Lord L * * *, with an air of distraction; “ but you may carry this romantic generosity too far; you will sacrifice the son, render him miserable for life; and will *that* ensure the peace of his mother, will *that* prove your gratitude (what a mistaken word!) to his family?”

“ My lord,” said Elinor, rising, “ ’tis time to end this conference, which only delays your attendance on your parents. Once for-all, I solemnly declare I never will hear this subject renewed without their full approbation; and as that cannot, ought not to be solicited, and as I am firmly of opinion that a marriage with me would degrade your family—under all these circumstances I neither can nor will be your wife.

“ But,” added she, her voice faltering, “ if it will give you any pleasure, be assured I will never be the wife of any other man, nor shall I ever esteem another as I do you. And now fly, my lord, to console your noble and much-afflicted parents.”

Lord L * * * arose.—“ I will obey you,” said he; “ at present I can say no more;

more ; but, I trust we shall meet again. Yes, Heaven is just, and virtue like yours must be its peculiar care."

With a profound bow and deep sigh he lifted up the tapestry and disappeared, leaving Elinor overwhelmed with sorrow, which vented itself in a torrent of tears, and gave relief to an overcharged heart.

After some time she recovered sufficiently to lock the door behind the tapestry, a precaution she had formerly neglected.

"He is gone !" said she, suppressing a sigh, "he is gone to perform *his* duty ; thank Heaven I have been enabled to obey *mine* ! How hard the trial, yet how delightful the thought that I have withstood the temptation of his heart and my own, and that my dear countess will have no cause to upbraid me."

This consolatory idea made large amends for self-denial—so sweet is the consciousness of having performed our duty. Elinor seemed elevated above herself, she felt the gratification of self-applause ; and sure, to

a good and ingenuous mind, *that* must be the first and purest of all gratifications.

She left the study with a heart more at ease, a countenance less clouded; and sought, in constant employment, in practising her several lessons, and in improving the accomplishments taught her by her benefactress, to fill up her time, and engage her mind from dwelling too much on circumstances and objects that, in spite of reason and fortitude, would sometimes painfully affect her.

We shall leave her for the present, so laudably engaged, and follow Lord L * * *, who, with a full and oppressed heart, set off with all speed after his parents. But in those days there were no turnpike roads, no such trained horses, or dashing young men as now ride fourteen or fifteen miles in an hour; his speed by no means equalled his impatience, and the tedious travel was not lightened by any pleasing reflections on the past, or gay hopes of future pleasures: fatigued both in body and mind he at length alighted at
the

the house of Messrs. Trumans, believing it the most likely place to hear of the earl's residence, and he succeeded to his wishes.

Within an hour after his arrival in London he found himself locked in the embraces of his mother, who shed tears of joy, and even his father received him with more kindness than could have been expected.

"Thank Heaven, my dearest Edward, you are in safety!" cried the countess; "how great has been my anxiety! Why did you leave your friends so abruptly; where have you been concealed?"

The earl observing his son's visible confusion, was willing to spare him at that time.—"Come, come," said he, "ask no questions now; he will inform us of his motions all in good time, and account for his frolic satisfactorily, I dare say. He has brought us to London sooner than I intended, but just in time to pay our duty at court; I shall therefore speak to the baron soon about our presentation."

Lord L * * * bowed, and was about to reply, when Baron P * * * entered the

room. The earl had called at his house in Whitehall, but he was from home; and now came to return the visit, and convey them to his own house, having sent for Lady P * * * from the country to receive her friend.

“ Ah!” cried the baron, taking Lord L * * * by the hand, “ this is an unexpected pleasure, after the inquiries made for you—You have been playing truant, I suppose. Well, well, never blush, such things will be; young men will have their frolics: I am heartily glad to see you.”

Then, apologising to the earl and countess for addressing their son first, he cried out gaily—“ Where is my young favourite, your lovely Elinor?”

“ We have left her at the castle,” answered the countess.—“ How!” said he, his countenance changing: “ Is it possible you are come to London without her; that you could leave the sweet girl in that dull place alone, a prey to solitude, and without a companion?”

“ She

"She has a very worthy woman as a companion," replied the earl, coldly; "and Miss Masham has too many resources to be a 'prey to solitude.' Our journey was very suddenly determined on, and as hastily executed. We only intend to be presented at court, that I may acknowledge my gratitude and respect for his majesty's favour, and then return to B * * castle."

"You must, however, go with *me*," returned the baron; "I have engaged you to Lady P * * *, and I will take no denial. I am considerably disappointed, I own, by not seeing my young favourite; she has seldom been out of my thoughts. Apropos—Lord L * * *, you have seen the lovely Elinor, no doubt; what is your opinion of her?"—The earl and countess turned their eyes on him; he was evidently confused; and his voice faltered as he hesitatingly replied, "Miss Masham is certainly a very charming young woman, my lord."

"Aye, too charming to be shut up in the wilds of Scotland," retorted the baron; "I want Lady B * * to permit her to pay

a visit to us; Lady P * * * would introduce her into society, and polish the sweet rustic, who is yet a stranger to the world."

The baron, in his earnestness, had forgot the ill compliment he made the countess, who gravely said—"Miss Mashaam, my lord, is entirely her own mistress, and not under my controul: her own choice has determined her stay in the country at present, though, I hope, she will soon accompany me to Edinburgh; and if she cannot acquire the *high polish of fashion* there, she will at least have claims to render her respectable every where."

The baron felt the reproof for his lapse in politeness, and Lord L * * * was delighted with this testimony of his mother to the virtues of Elinor: he determined to open his heart to her, without confessing his late retreat at the castle, till he saw how his overtures were received; and from her own tenderness, he indulged a flattering hope of success.

Very contrary to the inclinations of the earl, who rather wished to be in lodgings during

during the short period he designed to pass in London, they were obliged, by the baron's importunities, to attend him to his house; and in a few hours after their arrival, were welcomed by Lady P. * * *, who had hastened to town to embrace an old friend and the companion of her juvenile days.

The meeting was affectionate on both sides; the countess felt a thousand pleasurable recollections spring to her mind when she beheld the friend of her youth; and Lady P. * * *, immersed as she was in folly and the dissipation of the times, (for follies and extravagancies *there were* in those days, though they bore not the unblushing front and shameless excesses of more modern times,) her heart grown cold from the neglects of her lord, and her bosom a stranger to the sympathies of friendship; yet, when returning the warm embrace of the countess, the freezing chillness of her heart was thawed by a kindness to which she had long been a stranger; it unlocked to receive a new guest, and the soothing voice of friendship sunk deep into her bosom.

The

The ladies viewed each other with surprise ; each accustomed to her own face, saw not the ravages of time, nor the marks of faded beauty, which now were visible to each in the complexion of their friend. Near twenty-two years had elapsed since they were universally admired ; their ages were much the same ; Lady P * * * had *then* a confessed superiority over her friend, though both were lovely women ; but late hours, a dissipated life, and a mind far from being at ease for many previous years of her life, when her lord's neglect bore hard upon her feelings ; all together had committed more depredations upon her features and enchanting bloom, than the hand of Time. Consequently, the countess had now the advantage over her ; whose regular way of living, a heart at peace with itself, and a naturally placid temper, contributed not a little to ward off the inevitable destroyer of beauty.

Yet, both were altered, and both were astonished at the change. A thousand pleasing recollections stole on their minds, the happy hours of their juvenile days
gave

gave many tender sensations, though they were not unmixed with silent observations on present circumstances.

Lady P * * * exhibited a fine lady dressed in the highest and most splendid style of fashion appropriate to a blooming girl of eighteen. The countess displayed her mind in her apparel; elegantly neat, without shew or expence; her matron-like appearance denoted the woman of sense, and while she conformed decently to the fashion of the day, it was in a style of "soberness," as Lady Grace expresses it.

When the first salutations were over, Lady P * * * asked for Miss Masham; "I am mortified," said she, "that you have not brought her with you; the baron returned from Scotland in raptures with your young friend. Her strange way of life before your arrival at the castle must have made her an object very curious and entertaining to you; an absolute recluse, I have understood."

"She was, indeed, secluded from any knowledge of the world," replied the countess; "and though some pains had been
been

been taken with her education within the limited powers of her friends, the instruction she gleaned was more calculated to fit her for being an inhabitant of the other world, than of this. Every virtue of the heart and mind was taught her, but very little of society and manners; and except some voluminous romances of the last century, the Lives of Plutarch was the only book of entertainment she had ever read."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Lady P * * * ; "what an automaton had you to form—what an Herculean labour yours, to give any polish to so rough a diamond!"

"You were never more mistaken," returned the countess; "her capacity is astonishing, her application unremitting; her mind is like a storehouse of wonders, that only wanted to be unlocked, and the goods drawn out to advantage, to surprise and charm every beholder."

"You are really very eloquent on the subject," said the earl, in rather a peevish accent; "but remember perfections over-rated, to pursue your metaphor, are like

goods over-valued, and sink in the estimation of judicious people from being prized too highly; therefore we will leave Elinor to speak for herself at some future period, when we have the honour of seeing Lady P * * * at B * * castle."

"Me!" cried she; "I go into Scotland! not whilst I can draw my dear countesses to London, you may be assured: I have no taste for the wild beauties of Nature, barren, uncultivated spots, or old castles with moats and bridges." A summons to dinner interrupted the conversation, and of course changed a subject that had given very different sensations to the earl and Lord L * * *.

The former was vexed with his lady for saying so much of Elinor; the other, on the contrary, devoured every word she uttered, thought he had never seen her look so handsome, or speak so sensibly, as when warm in the praises of his "peerless fair one." The affection his mother expressed for her determined him to open his mind, confess his love, and supplicate her interest with his father.

This

This plan settled, he grew more cheerful, and in the evening, when Monsieur Fernis came to him, he readily forgave the information he had sent to the castle, and apologised for his abrupt departure.

The following morning Lord L * * * found an opportunity to see his mother alone, and, after a little preface, gave her the history of his heart, without saying he had been at B * * castle, a knowledge of which, he thought, might displease her, having, by his concealment, occasioned her a painful journey, and much anguish of mind.

The countess heard him with real concern develope the secret. However greatly she valued Elinor, she loved the interest of her son better; she wished to see him great and splendid, as well as happy; and she thought he had pretensions to ensure success among the first families in either kingdom, from whence he might choose a wife, beautiful, accomplished, and with rank and fortune to add dignity to his own.

Whereas,

Whereas, though Elinor's beauty, virtue, and thousand good qualities, created and deserved esteem, she was "nobody knows who;" and the pride of ancestry, with the high-mettled Welsh blood, (her mother being descended from the great Lewellyn,) revolted against a connexion that could confer neither honour nor dignity.

Her son listened with attention and respect to all the objections she formed, all the arguments she deduced from their opposite circumstances, and from an assurance that his father never would approve of a union so disadvantageous to his interest, so inimical to his views for his son's establishment. She concluded a long string of arguments, with hoping he would not venture to contract a marriage clandestinely so opposite to their wishes.

"You have no cause to dread the latter, madam," said he; "for this insignificant, despised young woman, has a soul too elevated to accept the hand of a prince without the concurrence and approbation of his family. By withholding your consent,
you

you fix me miserable for life. I solemnly protest I will never marry any other woman while she is single; and, as she will neither receive my addresses, nor permit my visits, but with your full and decided approbation, I have nothing to expect or hope for from her, were I inclined, as I am not, to purchase happiness at the expence of your displeasure."

He bowed, and left her overwhelmed with grief. She sent for the earl, her own heart a little softened by the generous self-denial of Elinor, and the respect he had observed towards her. She repeated every word of the preceding conversation, and saw the earl was inexpressibly vexed. In the first moments of his displeasure, he regretted the partiality which had induced them to retain Elinor at the castle; he blamed her constant and ill-timed praises; and declared he should despise his son for ever if he persisted in such an ill-placed affection.

"Yet, we did not despise Sir William Douglas," said the countess. — "What then, madam; you encourage your son?" — "Indeed,

—“ Indeed, no,” returned she, “ I do not wish to see Elinor his wife ; but candour whispers, that if she was a proper wife for Sir William, Lord L * * * is not degraded by his choice ; at the same time that, I hope, time and proper management may induce him to form different views ; and I have that perfect confidence in her, to be certain he will meet with no encouragement against our inclinations.”

A long conversation on the subject ensued ; and that same day Lord L * * * wrote a letter to his father, in which, no doubt, he exhausted his whole stock of eloquence to carry his point ; but though the earl was not warm in his reply, yet he was decisive, and made use of one argument that effectually silenced his unhappy son.

“ Our family,” said he, “ has long suffered under a reproachful stigma ; has been degraded, and the sons born in misery and obscurity. Heaven has, at length, restored to me the estate and titles of my ancestors ; it belongs to me, to you, to establish the dignity we have been deprived of ;

of; from *us* the family honours must derive fresh distinction to expunge the stain that has long clouded them.

“ And shall the gratification of one passion supersede all other claims? Has my son no true nobleness of soul? Is he incapable of making one sacrifice, which, though great, will be but temporary, towards establishing his family, fame, and the happiness of his parents? I will not think so meanly of him. I shall yet glory in my Edward; he will not sully the *glory* of his ancestors, he will not embitter the few remaining years of a father's life.— No; *I know my son*, I confide in his love, and in that judgment which never yet deceived me.

“ He will do justice to his parents in believing that an opposition to *his* wishes gives *them* inexpressible pain; and that nothing less than a sense of the duty they owe to their ancestors, and the fame and honour which must be derivative from them to their posterity, could support them under the idea of afflicting *his* heart, or disappointing his present hopes.”

This

This letter destroyed every flattering hope, every pretence to complain of cruelty or injustice. Had the earl exerted parental authority, had he been severe, reproachful, or violent, Lord L * * * would have found spirit to have resisted severity, and have revolted against the violence of pride and ambitious views; but this calm, affectionate remonstrance, this confidence in his love and duty was not to be resisted.

Penetrated to the soul, he exclaimed—
 “Yes, my father, yes; your son will justify the confidence you place in him; he may, he must be wretched, but self-upbraiding shall have no share in the sorrows of his heart; he will not wound the bosom of such parents for any good this world can offer to him! And, after all,” added he, with a sigh, “what is the sacrifice I make? That angelic girl forbids my addresses without the approbation of my friends; a mere sufferance would not satisfy her delicacy, while the least shadow of an objection floated on their minds.

The

The worthy Lord L * * * passed some hours alone in the most painful regrets that he must resign the dearest hopes of his heart; but, convinced that it must be so, he scorned to do things by halves, or destroy the merit of his compliance by fruitless complaints. His answer was short.

“ My best-beloved father, your Edward is the son you expect, and wish him to be; to you he is indebted for life, for an education, and an example it will ever be his glory to copy. — However great his disappointment, however painful the sacrifice, he ceases to importune you for a concurrence to his desires; he foregoes the establishment of his own happiness, that he may ensure yours; and candidly acknowledges that, sensible the esteem of the amiable object he adores is only to be obtained by deserving *your* approbation, he has no self-denial to boast, for *her* resolution is unalterable; all the merit he claims, is a silent acquiescence to your will.”

The earl and his lady, in spite of family pride and ambitious views, in the very
moment

moment of self-gratulation for their success, felt some painful regrets that they should be compelled to oppose the wishes of a darling son who proved hese well deserved to be made happy.

Perfection dwells not in human nature : this noble pair had more virtues and fewer vices than nine-tenths of the world in general ; but one predominant passion of aggrandizing their family, made them pursue measures destructive to the peace of their only son, and give up the feelings of their hearts to the narrow prejudices of mankind, who weakly prefer nobility of birth, to beauty, virtue, talents, and that innate worth which is the true nobility of the soul.

The countess seized the first opportunity to embrace and thank her dear Edward for his compliance with their wishes.—

“ My dearest mother,” said he, passionately, “ you owe me no thanks ; they are due to the most charming, the most amiable of her sex—to the injured Elinor. Pardon me, but much as you say you love

her, you know not half her merit; it is my duty to do her justice."

He then frankly confessed his late concealment in the castle, his conversation with Elinor, and her fixed resolution to see him no more unless by their approbation: he enlarged upon the delicacy and propriety of her behaviour, concluding with—"This is the angel I must give up; this the woman who would dignify a throne; the dear object whose name from henceforth shall never pass my lips, but whose image is fixed in my heart for ever."

His voice faltered for a moment, tears fell from the eyes of the countess;—kissing her hand, he said, "Let us quit this subject, I cannot trust myself to dwell upon it; love the dear Elinor, love her, madam, if you value your son; to know that *she is happy* is the only circumstance that can reconcile me to a command I shall never dispute."

The Baron and Lady P * * * exerted themselves in plans of pleasure and amusement to gratify their guests; their son was
in

in France, which the B * * family considered as no great misfortune, for Mr. Tudor's character was so completely detestable, that they wished for no intercourse with him.

Lady P * * *, once, with an appearance of feeling, spoke of the degeneracy of her son to her friend, at the same time congratulating her on the virtues of Lord L * * *. "People are frequently punished for the impatience of *their* wishes, and for presuming to dictate to Heaven what ought to be, in *their* shallow comprehensions," said she. "I buried three lovely girls without their deaths being regretted by a single sigh from their father, who murmured incessantly because he had not a son: this much-desired son was at length granted to his wishes, and from infancy he has been one continued source of vexation and alarm."

She proceeded to say, that his neglects and inattention to her, his boundless extravagance and degrading pursuits, had long since weaned her *affections* from him, though she still felt perpetual anxiety lest

he should disgrace his family by some bad actions, from the low company he at times associated with. She observed that Lord L * * * looked out of health, and his countenance wore an air of dejection.

The remark awakened the tender feelings of a fond mother, who could so well account for the visible change of his complexion: she did not fail to communicate her fears to the earl, and, after mature deliberation, they determined upon returning into Scotland, to perfect their plan as soon as possible. Meantime the earl waited on Lord Mountjoy, and had the pleasure to hear his son had not left town, though he purposed doing so within ten days at farthest.

On his return to the baron's, he had an interview with his son, and expressed his wishes that he would accompany the son of Lord Mountjoy to the continent for a few months; delicately hinting, that new scenes, a pleasing companion, and different objects, would divert his mind, and turn the current of his present ideas into a different channel.

Lord

Lord L * * * made no objection ; all places were alike to him, since banished from her who had the possession of his heart. The arrangements were soon adjusted ; and those tender parents, who really doated on their son, consented to suffer the pangs of a separation to gratify the proud claims of supporting the family consequence. So true it is that one predominant passion swallows up all other regards,

Lord L * * *, being introduced to the Mountjoy family, was received with every mark of respect and esteem by my lord, his son, and a very amiable young woman, his daughter, about nineteen. His lordship immediately concluded his father had extended his views in this introduction beyond the temporary absence of a few months from England ; but his heart told him such views never would be gratified.

Meantime the earl, his lady, and son, were presented at court, and graciously received through the influence of the baron. A crowd of company visited at his house, of similar dispositions to the baron

and his lady, who were never happy unless in a round of dissipations ; but they were such as little accorded with the less fashionable, but more rational minds of the earl and his countess, who waited, with impatience for the departure of Lord L * * *, that they might return to B * * castle.

The day at length arrived, and the parting was more painful than they had supposed it could be ; the sacrifice of affection to pride was not an inconsiderable one, and the earl found some difficulty in consoling the tender mother by a plea of absolute necessity.

The baron and his lady, who were strangers to the affectionate emotions of parental fondness, were surprised at the distressing concern of the earl, at the agonies of a tender mother who doated on her son ; and regarded such testimonies of affection as they did not understand, as proofs of great weakness, or extreme affectation.

After the departure of Lord L * * *, the earl and countess mentioned their intention of leaving England ; a design strenuously

nuously opposed by their friends, who conjured them to remain in town till the parliament broke up, and then accompany them to their country seat. They urged them to send for Elinor; and Lady P * * * offered to send her own woman to bring her up.

This kindness was gratefully acknowledged, but not accepted; they were fixed in their intention to return home; and though no entreaties could prevail on Lady P * * * to visit Scotland at that season of the year, she gave them some faint hopes of seeing her during the summer.

“ You have given me such pleasing hours,” said she, “ in the retrospection of our happy juvenile days, that I shall long more than ever for your society; besides, I want to see this beauty, this incomparable girl, that has made the baron blind, he says, to all other perfections: not that I pin my faith upon his judgment, for he is but too susceptible to the charm of a new face; though, I believe, you will own with me, that ’tis high time

for him to give up *his* gallant pursuits when his son travels the same road so furiously."

"You are an ill-natured, unpolished monitor," returned the baron, carelessly, "but whilst I have health and spirits, your eloquence will be all thrown away; and," added he, turning to the earl, "whatever road Lady P * * * may choose to travel this summer, you may depend upon seeing me. I was abruptly broken in upon lately, and am determined to make a finish of my visit."

Within a few days after this conversation, Lord and Lady B * * took leave of their friends, and proceeded on their journey to Scotland. Previous to their arrival we will look back on Elinor, who, after the departure of Lord L * * *, sought, by a variety of occupations and studies, to engage her mind from dwelling on one object too interesting, and now more dear to her heart than ever.

Whilst she passed her solitary hours thus instructively, she had frequent letters from her dear countess, and had the pleasure

sure to hear their son was with them. At length she received one from Lord L * * * ; he apologised for the liberty of addressing her, and confessed, with a regret no words could describe, the ill success of his application to his parents, who, he found, had formed other views for him, though they dearly loved *her*, and did justice to her merit.

“ Whatever *their views* may be,” said he, “ they never can be answered in the way they wish for. As I cannot marry without their approbation, never will I form a union contrary to the sentiments of my heart ; that heart is yours, and your image is engraven on it, your happiness my first wish ; and, till I cease to breathe, I shall love and respect you above all other women.” He concluded with an affecting picture of his sufferings, and with entreating her sometimes to remember the man who adored her.

This letter rendered Elinor completely wretched ; for, notwithstanding her heroism when he was present, and the recollection of the sentiments casually dropped

by the earl and countess; though she deceived herself into a belief that she was perfectly resigned in the idea of being separated from him for ever—it is most certain that, in defiance of reason, a latent hope often fluttered round her heart, and she indulged some flattering moments of delight with the “*possibility*” that his irresistible eloquence might subdue and bend parental tenderness to a coincidence with his wishes.

Now hope was annihilated, despair was certain; her doom was fixed; and those dear friends who had flatteringly called her their adopted child, it was evident, did not think her deserving of being their natural daughter.

Humbled, desponding, and overwhelmed with grief, the letter in her hand, she strolled into the garden; there she met old Malcolm.—“Ah! my dear young lady,” said he, “you look grieved; God send no bad news has arrived. My lord and lady—”

“Are both well, my good friend,” answered she; “I have met with something
to

to make *me* uneasy, but, thank Heaven, they have no cause for affliction: may *they* never know sorrow, whatever becomes of me."

Tears rolled down her cheeks.—"Ah, gracious!" said he, "are *you* so unhappy; *you*, so handsome, so good, and so rich. Dear me! what signifies your birth? you are a thousand times better than the proud Miss of Douglas castle."—Elinor was about to answer, when they were surprised at seeing Bridget advance towards them.

Elinor had a "mind diseased;" she viewed the intruder with no friendly aspect, and certainly would have spoken with some severity had she not observed, on her nearer approach, all the marks of grief and rage struggling for expression.

"O, father! O, Miss Elinor! O, the wicked rogue! That Sandy, that villain has stript me; has carried away all my riches, my best clothes and trinkums; amost all that I had groped and groped together for so many years, not a soul in the world knowing it. O, dear gracious! 'tis a mercy he has not taken all, and left

me as naked as a new-born babe. Then there's mother a shouting and scolding, and here be I ruinated; all my money, all my long savings gone. O, O! what will become of me? I shall be no longer the lady of the village. O, the vile rogue, if I could tear his nasty eyes out I should be happy.

“ Lord, father, how you stand! Aye, aye, now you and the rich Miss Elinor, *you* be pleased, you be well enough off, and poor Bridget and her mother they may go to the dogs after all their years of labour, and working for some folks to have all the good things of the world, whilst other folks may starve.”—She then literally roared, stamping her feet with passion.

Old Malcolm was indeed thunderstruck, and incapable of speaking; Elinor was not less surprised and shocked, for however ill this woman had behaved to her, however she disliked her for want of duty and tenderness to her father, she no sooner heard of her sad situation, and beheld her agonies of grief and distress, than her gentle heart was softened, her displeasure abated, and

an object in affliction was an object of compassion to her.

“Pray,” said Elinor, “do not thus give way to passion; I am sorry for your distress; tell me the particulars, and say what I can do to serve you.”—“Ah, Bridget!” cried her father, shaking his reverend grey locks, “how little do you deserve this goodness, when, even now, you make base reflections on this blessed young lady. Now you see what pride and unnatural behaviour comes to.—Poor Martha! I will not desert *you* in trouble, though I was too mean to be admitted to *your* parlour.”

He burst into tears, repeating—“Ah, poor Martha, in thy old age robbed of a bounty but ill deserved, yet I will not forsake thee. Dear Miss Elinor, I must go to my poor wife.”—“Do so, my good friend,” said she, “and assure her that from respect to our dear countess, and the many attentions I received from Mrs. Malcolm in my youth, tell her to compose her mind; she shall never know poverty whilst I live.”

“Too

“ Too much, too much,” cried he, weeping still more violently ; “ we don’t deserve this bounty, indeed we don’t ; but you are a daughter of Heaven, I am sure, whoever was your earthly father. I’ll go to old Martha, and tell what an angel you be ; but if she or I could work, God forbid we should be a burden to such a good lady. Alack-a-day ! our labour’s done, and our sand-glass is nearly run out.”

Bridget, who had dried her eyes on the declaration of Elinor, that her mother should not want, and in whom selfishness was the guiding principle of the mind, quickly perceived that interest must lead her to be civil to Elinor. Little minds have all that low cunning which enables them to veer about, to cringe and flatter where they have points to carry, and render every base passion subservient to self-interest.

Dropping the apron from her eyes, she said, in a fawning tone, “ Aye, do, my dear father, go and comfort my poor mother ; as for Miss Elinor, she knows very well what a trouble it must be to me that my wicked rogue of a husband should
rob

rob you and she of every thing ; it was all along of Sandy about the pipe and the parlour, for mother and I scolded with him like any thing about it. Yes, indeed Miss Elinor, it was all his fault ; and now the villain to take all away, when he saw how I was respected, when I had the best gowns and the best things in the village, and when all the folks called me Madam. O, the wicked, wicked rogue !”

Here she began to bellow out in Oh's and Ah's, while poor Malcolm silently stole away.

When Elinor perceived he was gone, and beheld the mean, deceitful Bridget making a “mockery of woe,” she could not repress a rising indignation, though she had too much generosity of soul to upbraid a fallen enemy. “Bridget,” said she, “return to your parents ; comfort them, endeavour by your duty and affection to console them for the trouble you have brought upon them, and to-morrow I will call on them myself. I again repeat they shall never want.”

“O, my

“O, my dear, sweet Miss Elinor!”—
“I am neither to be flattered nor deceived by words that come not from the heart,” said she, a little sternly: “I well know what claims you have upon me for the many unfriendly offices you have done me, but I scorn to reproach you now; if you wish to receive any favours from me, you must obtain them by your duty to your parents.”

The deceitful creature could make no reply; she courtesied, in silence, and withdrew; with rancour boiling in her bosom, and envy gnawing at her heart.

Elinor, drawn from the contemplation of her own misfortunes by the troubles which pride, folly, and knavery had brought on those weak and worthless people, felt a secret satisfaction that she had the power to assist, and make them blush for their past behaviour to her; but she had too much goodness of heart to rejoice at their deserved distress; on the contrary, she felt for the sorrow of Mr. Malcolm and the downfall of all his wife’s visionary consequence.

Her

Her charity, however, did not extend to Bridget; she disliked and despised her: whilst her parents lived she would support her to attend on them, but no longer; she would enable her to get her bread, by some mode of industry, but she resolved not to support her in idleness whenever old Malcolm and his Martha should be taken from her.

In this determination she discriminated properly, between acts of real generosity and the folly of lavishing favours on the unworthy, and those who are capable, by industry, to carve out their own subsistence.

Her thoughts now naturally fell into another channel.—How infinite were her obligations to Heaven for having preserved *her* from poverty, and inspiring her generous benefactress, the late countess, with sentiments in her favour, which, by her bounty, gave her the heartfelt pleasure of relieving a worthy, oppressed old man!

The following day she went, accompanied by Mrs. Loyd, to Mrs. Malcolm's house,

house, and was not a little surprised at the ridiculous manner in which they had displayed their furniture to give them an air of consequence. The good old man welcomed her with blessings, Mrs. Malcolm with an humbled air of mortified pride, and Bridget with such an abundance of fawning civility, that Elinor despised her more than ever.

On enquiry, she learnt that the crafty Sandy having prevailed on the Malcolms to assign over their annuity to him, and having got possession of Bridget's fifty pounds, with what other monies he could collect, their few articles of plate, and every portable thing of value, had taken an opportunity to quarrel with his wife and her mother, and swore, in a passion, he would never see them more.

He had been gone two days, and they were still in hopes of his returning, when they discovered the loss of their property, and were informed Sandy had purchased a horse and left the village on it, with baggage both before and behind him.

They

They had now no doubt of their misfortune; he had got the assignment of the annuity, and they had no further claims to procure them a morsel of bread.

Such was the melancholy tale told by Mrs. Malcolm, with bitter lamentations on her own folly in being persuaded by Bridget to give every thing into his possession; though she mingled some reflections on her husband for being too proud to smoke in the cellar, and going away, otherwise *he* might have kept a little look-out upon the base rogue.

Elinor asked Mr. Malcolm whether he would return to the castle, or chose to remain there.—“Dear young lady,” said he, “poor Martha has been my wife near fifty years, she has sometimes been cross and crusty, but God forbid I should desert *her* in trouble who hath attended me in sickness.—No, no; I will share her fate in poverty, though I left her to enjoy her riches.”

“I applaud your resolution,” returned Elinor, “it proves the goodness of your heart, and I will take care to support you
here

here comfortably ; but I expect you may smoke in the parlour, and that you may be considered as master here, for 'tis on you I shall settle an annuity, and also write to the countess in your behalf.

“ Mrs. Malcolm,” added she, “ I am obliged to you for many kindnesses in my youth ; I shall feel pleasure in returning them ; depend upon it you and your husband shall never know the want of decent comforts, such as I have the power to procure for you.”

She accompanied these words with a handsome present of money to the old man, which drew tears from his eyes, a profusion of thanks from Mrs. Malcolm, and some inarticulate ones from Bridget, whose vanity, though humbled to the dust, had not eradicated from her heart her former propensities to envy and malice ; they retained full possession of her mind, and the good, benevolent Elinor was more the object of her hatred than ever, though she cringed and fawned to hide the baseness of her heart.

On

On Elinor's return to the castle she found a letter from the countess, slightly mentioning the departure of Lord L * * * for the continent, and her intention of returning quickly to "her beloved Elinor, whom she longed to fold to her bosom." If she was gratified by this kindness, she felt some pain in the reflection, that to the absence of their son, and the sacrifice of his wishes to their commands, she was perhaps indebted for these warm expressions of affection.

However enlightened her understanding, Elinor could not comprehend how it was possible to doat on Lord L * * *, to love *her* affectionately, and yet when they had the power to make both happy, they should adopt such measures as must entail misery on the objects of their affection.

This was a contradiction she could not reconcile, even in the reflection that she was "nobody knows who;" for, not an adept in the prudential maxims of the world, she conceived the peculiarity of her situation more an object of sorrow to herself,

herself, than as an insurmountable obstacle to her future settlement in life.

Sir William Douglas having offered her his hand, she did not suppose his high spirit would have wished for a connexion that would attach disgrace to him; and therefore, though she could not confer honour by family pride, like Miss Douglas, she concluded it must be other motives of particular consideration besides her deserted state that governed the earl and countess in their disapprobation of a union between Lord L * * * and herself.

Whatever were the causes, the effects were the same; she was deprived of all hope that she should ever be the wife of the man she loved, and was apprehensive that it was on her account, to prevent their meeting at the castle, that he was now sent to the continent, and his fond parents deprived of the blessing they so highly valued—the presence of a beloved son.

Occupied by this idea, the castle became irksome to her; she thought it was
her

her duty to leave it, that she might not be the source of regret and pain to her friends: yet, where could she go; a stranger to the world, a novice in its customs and manners, unacquainted with a human being out of that house except Baron P * * *, and her heart revolted against accepting his invitation or protection.

After long deliberation for several days on the subject, she could form no other resolution, than to consult the countess, and have a recommendation from her to some family who might receive and board her; for the more she reflected the more she was convinced it was a point of delicacy and duty that she should leave the castle.

Whilst our heroine's mind was thus perplexed, a temptation met her, that, had her's been a common mind, hackneyed in the selfish or even prudential maxims that govern nine-tenths of the female world; had rank and riches been desirable in her eyes; had power and independence been deemed superior to a very moderate fortune, uncertain prospects, and

and the solitary consolation of sacrificing the temptations of vanity to the integrity of principle ;—

In short, had she not been the child of Nature unadulterated by a commerce with mankind, she might have gratified the most ambitious views of a vain woman.

She was surprised by a letter from Sir William Douglas, (who had taken care to be minutely informed of every occurrence that passed both in England and in Scotland,) apologising for the liberty of an application, on the success of which his happiness depended.—“ That rejection he had experienced through the friendly interference of Lord B * * had overwhelmed him with sorrow ; but having been informed no other predilection was the cause, and his character such as, he flattered himself, could not be objectionable, he had presumed to hope *that* painful rejection might have proceeded from causes he had now, most happily, the means to obviate.”

He then proceeded to tell her, that his sister was on the point of marriage with a
German

German nobleman of high rank, and that his mother intended to accompany her abroad; therefore those connexions of his, so little acquainted with her merit, she would see no more: he offered the most advantageous settlements, and her choice of residence whether in Scotland, England, or occasionally in both.

He added, that he had written to the earl and countess, had besought their interest, and entreated her to hear his friends, and take time for consideration before she fixed the future happiness or misery of a man entirely devoted to her.

If Elinor was greatly surprised at this second application, at first she could not resist some emotions of pleasure and pride in the idea of rejecting such an establishment in compliment to Lord L * * *. "I promised," said she, exultingly, "that I would not be the wife of any other man, and, one day or other, he may know how strictly I keep my word; he may know that I refused an amiable man of rank and fortune to prove myself not undeserving of his love, and convince him and his family

a rectitude of principle shall be the guide of my life. Yes, I will strictly adhere to my promise, which, in fact, is no sacrifice either to inclination or pride, because I obey the dictates of my heart."

Such were her pleasurable ideas, but more generous ones soon took place on reflection. She was grieved to be the source of sorrow to a really worthy and unexceptionable man, to whom not one reasonable objection could be made; she considered that in him she might have found a protector, a lover, and a husband, had she never known Lord L * * * ; that such a union would be highly pleasing to the earl and his lady, and rid them of all uneasy fears on her account.

But, to marry one man when her heart felt a preference for another, would be a violation of delicacy, of principle, an act of baseness to both.—"No," said she, "whatever becomes of me I will never forfeit my integrity: I can esteem Sir William, but I can never love him; I pity his unhappy passion, but I cannot reward it,—my heart is irrecoverably fixed, and

and no temptation can ever recall it.—But why do I dwell on the subject for a moment, have I not promised Lord L * * * never to marry, and ever irrevocably will I keep that sacred promise so dear to my soul.”

She had scarcely pronounced these words with an enthusiasm of voice and manner, when a sudden recollection threw her into a fit of shivering :—“ Beware of rash promises,” said the worthy Mr. Masham in his posthumous letter to her ; “ such have occasioned all *my* misery, and *your* misfortunes.”

“ Gracious father !” exclaimed she, looking up, with awe and terror in her countenance ; “ what have I done ?—disregarded that sacred injunction that ought never to have escaped my memory ! Yes, I have rashly plunged into the error that dear and respectable man so awfully cautioned me to guard against.”—Tears burst from her eyes, and for some time she gave way to the deepest affliction.

It was after many hours of painful inquietude that she began to reason herself

into some degree of composure, from reflecting, that *her* promise extended not beyond what regarded herself, could injure no one, violated no duty, since it coincided with her inclination, and had exacted no similar promise from Lord L * * *, to militate against the duty and obedience he owed to his parents.

This last was a consolatory idea; and she shuddered to think, that if his lordship, in the agitation of the moment, had bound himself as solemnly as she had done, the most bitter repentance for their mutual imprudence would have corroded every hour of her life.

He has said, thought she, that he can never love any other woman; but if I may believe the picture of the human heart, particularly the hearts of men, as the countess describes them, and as my late readings pourtray them, there is no dependence to be placed on professions dictated by present inclination only, and therefore the assertions and protestations of Lord L * * * amount to nothing. *I* only am bound, he is free; and may
Heaven

Heaven direct every event for his advantage and the happiness of his dear parents, wherever the poor Elinor may be doomed to reside, or whatever is her destiny.

Nothing of moment took place at the castle previous to the arrival of the earl and countess. The latter embraced Elinor, who flew to meet her with the warmest affection; the earl saluted her with an air of respect and kindness. Her heart throbbed with many painful emotions, with difficulty she suppressed the rising tear, and her agitations were too visible to pass unnoticed. The countess saw her beautiful bloom was faded, her cheeks pale, and that she was much thinner than when she had quitted her.

Affection and compassion took such hold of her heart, that, at that moment, had it depended upon her, the entreaties of a beloved son would have been crowned with success; but this remorse and tenderness were but temporary; after a conversation with her lord, his judgment and sentiments had so much weight, and such

a powerful influence over her mind, that she readily coincided with his views.

Lord L * * * was not mentioned by either party the first evening: Elinor related the events that had befallen the Malcolms, and her friends voluntarily offered to support the old folks; the earl did more, he said he would write to Trumans, who were trustees under the will of the late countess, to forbid, if possible, payment of the annuity according to the assignment, which had been obtained under false pretences.

Elinor had a sleepless night; she formed and rejected many schemes, and at length determined to explain the situation of her heart to the countess, propose leaving the castle, and request the advice and aid of her only friends towards fixing herself at some distance. This resolution cost her many sighs and tears; but she saw it was a measure necessary, and inevitable at some future period, and therefore might as well be carried into execution at once.

When

When the earl left them after breakfast, at which only a desultory conversation passed, the countess, rather abruptly, mentioned the letter they had received from Sir William Douglas; Elinor as frankly put the one she had been favoured with into her hands.

"My dear child," said she, tenderly, "as I cannot suppose you to be unacquainted with certain transactions that took place in London, the result of which was the departure of my son for the continent; situated as I am, I may be supposed to be interested if I solicit your regards, or at least your consideration of this proposal. Interested I am, but 'tis for your happiness; I hope you know me better than to suppose I wish you to sacrifice yourself to any views of mine.

"I scarcely know what to say to you on the business that may not bear the imputation of self-interest; you may guess my wishes for your establishment in life, and therefore I have no doubt but you will be candid in your reply."

Elinor was touched by the delicacy of this address, and very frankly told her the state of her heart, of the letter she had received from Lord L * * *, and her conclusions, after mature deliberation, both on that and the address of Sir William Douglas. She then, in a tremulous voice, mentioned her wish to leave the castle; all places were alike to her, and she hoped the countess would still protect and advise her, her youth and friendless situation calling for maternal care.

Tears trembled in her eyes; the countess was greatly moved.—“My dear, my confederate Elinor,” said she, “I translate your thoughts; I guess what are your motives for this design to leave us; give me a day or two for deliberation on the subject, and be assured that you possess my warmest esteem, my tenderest affection. It does not become me to urge you in favour of Sir William after your frank communication. Would to God I could remove all obstacles, that I could retain you with me for ever!—But, alas! wishes are fruitless without power.”

Elinor

Elinor made no reply : the subject was changed to their London amusements, the dissipated life of Lord and Lady P * * *, their presentation at court, and a number of occurrences to divert the mind of Elinor ; who gratefully attended, and appeared to be gratified.

Two days passed before the countess entered into any particular conversation ; on the third morning, after their usual repast, she said, rather hesitatingly—

“ My dear child, conscious that I cannot expect always to be favoured with your company, it has fortunately occurred to me that Lady P * * * mentioned a gentleman, formerly well known to us both, who now resides at Edinburgh, taking a select number of young ladies as parlour-boarders, who may, or not, agreeable to themselves, have masters to attend them in every branch of education. If you approve of it, I will write immediately about your admittance into her society.”

Nothing could be more grateful to Elinor than this proposal. To go into the world alone was the thing she dreaded ;

this appeared to be an asylum where the choice of company would be left to herself, and the improvement in her studies would agreeably fill up her hours. With her entire concurrence the countess wrote that very day; and this point settled, Elinor grew more cheerful, employed herself in looking over her wardrobe, and consented to have her clothes modernised, and to order such additions as might be thought necessary if she went to Edinburgh.

Meantime letters were written to Sir William Douglas with a final denial, that must terminate, at once, all hopes of success to his wishes. Elinor's was expressive of her gratitude and regard; but she frankly told him, "her heart was engaged, though possibly, and most probably, she should never marry the man of her choice; and if not *him*, no other man on earth."

When this letter reached the baronet, grief and vexation were his first emotions; mortified pride, indignant curiosity, and the insult thrown on his family-consequence by so obstinate a refusal from "nobody knows who,"

who," were his next feelings; and these he indulged in the hope of conquering a passion that never could be gratified.

The immediate marriage of his sister, so flattering to the pride of ancestry, her lord being nearly related to the Prince of Hesse, necessarily engaged him in a bustle, and he was at length prevailed upon to promise he would accompany them abroad, where a diversity of objects, new places and connexions, might, in time, eradicate that fervent love which caused him so much torment.

But to return to our heroine.—In due time Lady B * * received an answer from Madame Gaudry, the lady she had written to at Edinburgh; and in such terms as gave unspeakable pleasure both to her and Elinor. The situation and circumstances were exactly as they could wish. The day for her departure was fixed on by herself; for the countess really felt the extremest reluctance to part with her, though she was sensible that it was a prudent and right step for her to take.

Elinor paid a visit to old Mr. Malcolm; he wept like an infant when he understood that he saw her for the last time, his great age considered. Mrs. Malcolm affected to feel much sorrow; she *was* a little moved at parting, having known her so many years.

As to Bridget, she applied her apron to her eyes, not to hide her tears, but to conceal the want of them. The sight of Elinor was hateful to her, conscious of her impertinence and the malicious stories she had promulgated; mortified at her fallen consequence, and the obligations conferred on her family; obligations so undeserved, and which the turpitude of her mind could neither feel nor acknowledge as she ought; she rejoiced to hear that her benefactress was to leave the country, that virtue and goodness might no longer annoy her sight.

Elinor, who had neither ostentation nor pride, after acquainting Mr. Malcolm with the mode she had adopted for his support, took an affectionate leave, saying, it was uncertain when she should see them again, but that her best wishes would always attend them.

When

When she returned to the castle she saw the countess had been in tears. That truly amiable woman grew every hour more distressed in the idea of a separation neither her heart nor her judgment approved. How happy would such a daughter make her ! They wanted not money ; a family as respectable as their own sought her alliance ; every hour brought new excellencies to light in her disposition and good qualities ; and a marriage with such a woman must insure the felicity of a darling son.

Her prejudices and pride were weakened daily by every fresh instance of Elinor's virtues, and family consequence began to appear only as a secondary consideration in her views for her son ; his happiness in domestic life claimed the pre-eminence in the bosom of a fond mother ; and in short, she was not merely softened, but entirely subdued.

She determined to make one effort to overcome the strong objections of the earl without acquainting Elinor with her intention. This effort had been made whilst she

she was absent at the village, and the very ill success of her application had caused those tears, the traces of which were legible on her countenance when Elinor returned.

Alarmed at her appearance, the affectionate girl earnestly inquired if she was unwell or afflicted? — “Something of both,” answered the countess; “I have been disappointed in an affair of some consequence; the earl declines obliging me, and ’tis needless to repeat it to *you*; had I fortunately succeeded, you would have been the *first person* to have been made acquainted with it. Now, you will please me to ask no further questions.”

Elinor rightly judged the subject of this rejected application; her heart thanked the kind lady, but she forbore speaking. Several most affecting conversations passed between them, at different periods, before the day came in which they were to part, they knew not for how long.

To dwell on such scenes is unnecessarily painful; we shall therefore only say, that few real mothers felt more sorrow than the countess;

countess; nor could any daughter more regret a separation from a fond parent, than Elinor did from her. She supported herself in the hour of trial like a heroine, not to add *her* grief an additional load on her dear friend. The earl was extremely moved; he loved and esteemed her; only family pride, or what he called, "the claims of posterity not to disgrace his ancestry," held a superior place in his heart; for next to his wife and son, he really loved Elinor.

The housekeeper, Mrs. Loyd, and her own maid accompanied her, and a footman on horseback; who were ordered to see her safe in Madame Gaudry's house, and wait a few days to know if she approved of her accommodations. This kindness was deeply imprinted on the heart of Elinor; but a variety of emotions, many painful apprehensions crowded on her mind.

She was now embarked on the wide ocean of life for the first time; every step of her journey, every object was new and interesting to her; and though Mrs. Loyd, who

who had lived at Edinburgh, gave her every sort of information in her power; though the countess had enlightened her with a description of society and manners, such as exist in all great cities, yet she could not divest herself of terror, and every step she advanced in her journey gave additional agitation to her heart.

Whilst Elinor is travelling we will look back on some occurrences that took place in the family of Baron P * * *, who is by no means an unimportant person.

Extremely vexed and disconcerted that the earl of B * * had not brought Elinor to town, he neither urged the continuance of their visit nor regretted their departure, being determined to pass a month or two in Scotland very shortly, when his duty to the king would admit of his absence.

As for his lady, though she was really much pleased with the company of an old friend, yet there was such a marked difference in the sentiments and manners of the two ladies, that Lady P * * * would soon have been devoured by the spleen
had

had she been condemned to a life of regularity, such as the countess seemed most to enjoy.

Lord and Lady P * * * were a fashionable pair, that would have done honour to the present times by their perfect indifference for each other, the total neglect of domestic duties, and the eager pursuit after pleasures and dissipation.

'Tis true, they had not the credit of a *crim. con.* affair, nor even a separate maintenance, such elegant notoriety not being so openly tolerated in those days; but the baron was fond of every woman except his wife: her ladyship had her detached amusements. They seldom met but to entertain company, and then were the politest and best bred persons in the world at their own table.

We must however do Lady P * * * the justice to say, that had she married a man less fashionably accomplished, there is just cause for believing she would have made a very domestic wife. She had many good qualities, but she knew her own consequence, had a tolerable share
of

of vanity, and not less of family pride. When, therefore, she saw herself neglected after a few months' marriage; when she was condemned to pass her evenings alone, and often days and weeks without the society of her lord; when her glass told her she was lovely, and the men swore she was an angel—

How could the frailty of human nature be expected to withstand the temptations of the world to divert her chagrin, particularly when sanctioned not only by her husband's example, but by his persuasions? For, to avoid her reproaches, and turn her attention from *his* follies, he warmly solicited her to mix with the world and not sit moping at home.

Once advanced beyond the lines of prudence and rectitude, how difficult to stop short in the alluring paths of pleasure! If the principles of virtue are not sufficiently firm to resist the first temptation to folly, how easy the gradation to vice! and when once immersed in the vortex of fashionable follies, the unfortunate being who had forfeited her own esteem, is easily led on

to

to deserve the contempt and reproach of others.

Such was the situation of Lady P * * *. Her rank in society and the favour of the court claimed the outward show of respect even when the admiration of her beauty no longer existed, and with persons of a similar turn, she was the life and soul of every party. But she had a suspected reputation, though no conviction confirmed the loss of it. She was regarded as a woman of dissipated manners; she was not esteemed, though countenanced by the great world; and, still worse, she was conscious of her own errors without having the resolution to break from the chains she had unguardedly thrown round her, and which she had suffered to confine her within the pales of vice and folly, till she lost the inclination, as well as the power, to free herself from them.

This fashionable pair, left to themselves, soon separated; Lady P * * * went to Bath, her lord was still confined to attend the king a short time longer. It was about
a fort-

a fortnight after the departure of her ladyship when an express arrived from her to the baron; the contents of her letter what follows:

“ I am sorry to inform you, my lord, that a very disagreeable business has happened.—To my infinite surprise I found George here, when I had supposed him to be in France. It seems that at Lisle he fell into an acquaintance with a counsellor Mellor and his lady; the consequence was, that the latter has eloped with George, who came to England with her three days before my arrival.

“ Never did people conduct themselves so foolishly, as to come to a place crowded with company: surely they were mad not to foresee the consequence which has overtaken them.

“ The husband, enraged at the elopement, instead of going on his journey, returned, and traced them here; found out his wife, whom he dragged from her lodgings, (fortunately George was gone to Clifton,) and then

then came to me, insolently demanding my son, and vowing not to leave Bath till he had "shot him dead."

"Having no doubt but this hot-headed Irishman would execute his threats, I sent off a messenger, who fortunately met George, and prevented his return. But I fear Mellor will move heaven and earth to find him, and as yet I know not where he has taken flight to; therefore you had best endeavour to find him out, and avert the consequence of his folly and imprudence.

"A. M. P * * *."

The baron was not a little disconcerted by this affair, and execrated his son's folly most heartily: that son, whose birth he had been desirous of, had been a continued source of vexation to him, and more than once he had had occasion to lament that ever he had existence.

Where to find him he knew not, and therefore he was obliged to remain in all the painful suspense attending the uncertainty of the safety of an only child.

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In this situation we will leave him, as a deserved punishment for his own numberless vices, and return to our heroine, who arrived at Edinburgh, and was received by Madame Gaudry and five young ladies with every mark of attentive kindness and respect.

In the mild, benevolent countenance of the former, Elinor saw another Countess of B * * ; and though she shrunk a little from the lively manners and gay dresses of the latter, yet that social spark, implanted in our bosoms, that points towards society, as necessary to sweeten the rugged paths of life ; this spark, which had lain dormant in Elinor's bosom from not having seen any persons of her own age, all at once burst into light ; and when they addressed her with words of kindness, doubly agreeable from youth and beauty, it seemed as if a new world opened before her, and her frank, ingenuous heart expanded to receive and return their obliging civility to a stranger.

- Such was the society she had the good fortune to meet, such the polite urbanity of

of Madame Gaudry's manners, that Elinor was astonished in a few hours to find herself as easy, communicative, and comfortable, as if she had known them for as many months.

The terrors that had oppressed her, the awe that made her shrink at a first interview, insensibly wore off: Madame Gaudry had the happy art of inspiring ease, confidence, and pleasure in all who were fortunately placed with her.

In a few days Mrs. Loyd and the manservant prepared to return to B * * Castle. The good lady rejoiced to leave Elinor in spirits, and perfectly satisfied with her situation, though she often wished for a possibility of looking in on her revered and beloved countess, and sometimes a sigh escaped her to the recollection of Lord L * * * ; but she exerted every effort to repress the image that obtruded on her mind's eye from engaging her attention, and fervently prayed for his happiness, and the conformity of his sentiments to the will of his parents.

Elinor wrote to the countess in a style expressive of her heart, which glowed with love and gratitude, and thanked her for the delightful asylum her kindness had procured; she entreated her frequent correspondence, and promised to be very communicative and particular on every occurrence that happened.

The young ladies having masters to attend them, Elinor willingly embraced the same advantage: she had dancing, music, and drawing masters; and, though not yet able to join publicly in the former amusement, she attended Madame Gaudry and her young friends to an assembly, which consisted of all the fashionable people in Edinburgh.

Elinor was universally admired, and certainly bore the palm of beauty from all present. Curiosity attended admiration, and a buzz of inquiry, "Who is that lovely young woman?" pervaded the room; and the name of Miss Masham was echoed from one to another till it reached the ear of Elinor and her companions. She was extremely confused at the general notice she attracted;

attracted; and the eyes of so many persons fixed on her, with the importunities she received to accept of a partner, made her often wish she was a hundred miles off, and exceedingly repent having come to a public assembly.

Several gentlemen had requested her to dance, and she felt mortified that inability to perform prevented her, though 'tis more than probable, had she been ever so great a proficient in the science, she would have been too timid to have exhibited in public, so new as she was to the world.

Madame Gaudry undertook to answer for her fair pupil, "that being a perfect stranger in Edinburgh, it was her wish now to be an observer only; at the next assembly she might possibly become a performer."

Among the number of gentlemen who addressed her, and lamented her resolution of being "an observer," there was one who perpetually hovered near her, and refused to dance when called upon. He

took every opportunity to enter into conversation with her and her chaperon; nor could any reserve distance or send him away.

Though Elinor was greatly embarrassed by his undaunted perseverance, she could not help stealing a timid look at him now and then; his features seemed very familiar to her, and the tone of his voice struck her with a confused recollection of having heard it somewhere, though that was quite impossible, she thought, never having seen him before that night. She took an opportunity to mention it to Madame, and requested her to learn his name; she was told it was the honourable Mr. Tudor, son to Baron P * * *.

The mystery was now unravelled; he greatly resembled his father both in face and voice; but this knowledge only tended to make Elinor ten times more reserved; she detested his character. Lady B * * had delineated him in terms of such marked contempt and dislike, that Elinor's prejudices in favour of *her* judgment were greatly

greatly confirmed by the assurance of his behaviour to herself.

When the company broke up, he was at her elbow to hand her to the carriage; an offer she would have rejected, had not Madame Gaudry whispered her, not to be particular. The following morning he was at the door to inquire after her health; but receiving only a polite, verbal answer, and no admittance, he was obliged to go off much chagrined.

This gentleman, when he luckily met the messenger his mother had sent after him to Clifton, having no inclination to be "shot dead," made the best of his way to Bristol, leaving his *chere amie* to the rage of an injured husband, whose sense of honour, added to the national spirit of his country, was not likely to incline him to treat her with much lenity on such an occasion.

But self-preservation urged Mr. Tudor's flight; he was not one of those bold men who "dare to justify whatever they dare to do;" he was conscious of being wrong, and desirous of flying from the resentment

he had provoked. On his arrival at Bristol, he heard of a ship about to sail directly for Glasgow; unprepared as he was, without even a change of linen, and no large stock of money, he embarked on board her, landed at Glasgow, proceeded to Edinburgh, and threw himself on the friendship of his father's friend, Sir Joseph Macauley.

Sir Joseph received him as the son of a nobleman to whom he had been, on a former occasion, particularly obliged, and therefore readily paid Mr. Tudor every respect and attention he could wish for; and learning from him, that it was "a little affair of *honour*" that obliged him to leave England; without prying into the nature of this *honourable* affair, he wrote to the baron of the favour conferred upon him by this visit from his son, and his happiness in having the power to shew him all possible attention.

The baron was certainly very much pleased to hear his son was safe, but he had received another letter by the same post from Scotland that at first vexed him greatly;

greatly ; it was from the earl, who, among other things, told him, that Miss Masham had left them at her own request, and was gone to Edinburgh under the care of a respectable lady, where she was to have masters to attend her in the several branches of education she was desirous of learning.

This information was highly displeasing to the baron, till, on reflection, it afforded scope for his active talents to profit by ; and when he had looked over the letter from Sir Joseph Macauley, his chagrin vanished at once. Under a pretence to visit his friend and his son, he should see Elinor ; and his anxiety to have further conversation with her, was stronger than any predilection he had ever felt in his life.

Meantime Elinor was greatly harassed and tormented by Mr. Tudor ; she dared not stir out but he was at her elbow ; no contempt affected him, no plain speaking could rid her of his continual importunities. At length his passion increased by opposition ; he wrote to her, making her a formal tender of his hand, and requesting

permission to wait upon her, or Madame Gaudry, to satisfy them in every particular relative to his fortune, family, and prospects.

At the request of Elinor Madame Gaudry answered the letter politely, but decidedly declining the honour he intended her, and excusing herself from receiving a visit which could answer no purpose, or give any satisfaction to either party. She entreated him to consider this as a final answer, and hoped he would not give himself or her the trouble of any further application on the subject.

This letter threw him into a rage little short of madness, and in the very height of it a letter was delivered to him with the Berwick post-mark; the contents these:

“As you would wish to avoid everlasting remorse and sorrow, decline all acquaintance with Miss Masham; she is an *ignis-fatuus*, that may lead you to perdition.

“A FRIEND.”

Thunder-

Thunderstruck at this warning, he read it above twenty times ; the hand was unknown to him, nor had he a single acquaintance at Berwick. Sometimes he thought it was the trick of a rival ; then, that it was a contrivance of Elinor's to get rid of him ; but, after various conjectures, he could form no certain conclusions, and therefore regarded it only as a shallow artifice, which would fail to deter him from his purpose of pursuing his plan, and conquering the frozen heart of his haughty fair one.

How far he might have been troublesome to her must remain unknown, for the following post brought him a letter that changed his plans entirely. It was from Mrs. Mellow, his late favourite sultana, with information, that " she had escaped from her tyrant, and was concealed in a beautiful small village about ten miles from London, where she conjured him to join her in disguise without delay, as her husband had discovered that he had landed at Glasgow, and was determined to go into Scotland in search of him, when he had every thing

thing to dread from his revenge if they met ; but if he came away privately and joined *her*, they might defy his malice to trace them."

This letter, which came under cover to his valet, gave a new turn to his inclinations. Mrs. Mellor was beautiful, he had not been satiated with her company when the uncivil husband broke in upon them at Bath ; to remain in Edinburgh was hazardous, and the uncertain prospect of succeeding with Elinor would not justify, to prudence, the risk of his own safety.

His valet, who was in the interest of Mrs. Mellor, urged him to fly to her ; and pointed to him, how much better it was to go to such a beautiful, kind lady, than to run after a scornful one, and perhaps be "shot dead," as the hot-headed Irish counsellor threatened.

Mr. Tudor acceded to this opinion, and informed his friend, an engagement he had made, some time since, to accompany a friend to Paris, obliged him to depart thus suddenly, and after many thanks for his hospitality, he quickly withdrew

from Edinburgh. His cunning servant having procured disguises, they set off for Fort Patrick, taking the roundabout way of going through Ireland, and coming over from Holyhead, to avoid all possible chance of meeting with the furious husband.

Here we shall leave the gallant Mr. Tudor to congratulate our heroine on her deliverance from his importunities, and being freed from the constraint and confinement his troublesome attentions had imposed upon her.

She was every day more satisfied with her situation; Madame Gaudry was charmed with a character so new and uncommon; her ingenuous mind was legible in her countenance; every word and action was guided by simplicity and truth; she applied incessantly to her studies, and her progress was as rapid as her attention was unremitting. While the other young ladies entered into the various amusements of the city, she would pass days in gleaning from Madame Gaudry a thorough know-

knowledge of the customs and manners of the world so new to her.

The good lady conceived for her an affection truly maternal; and Elinor, who constantly felt a repugnance to the assumed name of *Masbam*, and blushed at the idea of a deception, thought it a duty she owed to herself and her kind friend to be perfectly unreserved, and to acquaint her with her real situation. This delicacy was correspondent to *her* feelings and character, though not necessary in the eyes of prudence; but she had been accustomed to obey the dictates of an upright heart, and knew no cautious reserves, sometimes justifiable in a world where falsehood and duplicity is often masked by a semblance of candour and friendship.

Her confidence in *Madame Gaudry* was happily not misplaced; it endeared her still more to that excellent woman, who very freely unlocked her heart in return. "You have often, my dear Miss *Masbam*," said she; "observed me endeavouring to suppress the bursting sigh, to
restrain

restrain the falling tear, when looking earnestly on *you*. Alas! my good young lady, your features strongly remind me of an irreparable loss, of the bitterest misfortune of my life, the death of an only and most deserving child, whom you greatly resemble, though you have the advantage in beauty.

“Your frankness and trust in my honour entitles you to an equal confidence on my part; and a brief history of my misfortunes will but too well account for the occasional sadness that overspreads my countenance, and which is deep rooted in my heart.”

Without further preface she entered on her short narrative.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

TWO WELL KNOWN FAMILIES.

During the falling day, when I look
back on you, I feel the good young
lady, your father's friend, and the
of an irreparable loss of the friend
in the course of my life, the death of an old
and most beloved friend, whom I have
known, though you have the advantage
of being.

Your father is and still in my honour
credits you to an equal confidence on my
part, and a brief history of my misfor-
tunes will but too well account for the oc-
casional letters that overshadows my con-
science, and which is deep rooted in my
heart.

Without further notice the entered on



END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

